I Dream with Open Eyes

The Life of David Lindsay
Author of A Voyage to Arcturus

Murray Ewing

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BOOKSHIP

To my brother, Garen, who showed me the young David Lindsay on the 1881 census, and started off this whole project

I Dream With Open Eyes: The Life of David Lindsay by Murray Ewing

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Contents

Contents 5
Introduction 7
1: David's Parents and their Families (–1876) 15
2: Childhood (1876–1890) 21
3: Work (1891–1903) 35
4: Alexander (1901–1915) 47
5: War and Marriage (1915–1918) 57
6: Cornwall and *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1919–1920) 70
7: *The Haunted Woman* (1921–1922) 80
8: *Sphinx* (1921–1923) 93
9: *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* (1924–1928) 101
10: Ferring and *Devil's Tor* (1928–1932) 112
11: *Devil's Tor* Reviews (1932) 124
12: *The Witch* (1932–1938) 136
13: Hove (1938–1945) 146
14: Postscripts (1945–) 152
15: Posthumous Reputation (1946–) 155
Timeline 194
David Lindsay's Chess Game 198
Bibliography 200
Notes 206
Index 217

Introduction

For the publication of his fifth novel, *Devil's Tor*, in 1932, David Lindsay was asked to provide some autobiographical information. He wrote:

> I was educated at Blackheath and in Scotland. Up to the War I was in business in the City of London. I was in the Army for upwards of two years, but saw no foreign service. On demobilisation I took up literature, having many years previously determined to do so sooner or later. *A Voyage to Arcturus* appeared in 1920; *The Haunted Woman* in 1922; *Sphinx* in 1923; *Adventures of M. de Mailly* in 1926. I was married in 1916, and am at present living happily with my wife and two daughters, aged 12 and 9. From 1919 to 1928 we lived in Cornwall; then moved to Ferring in Sussex.
>
> I have done the usual amount of foreign travelling, dislike sports, and take most of my present exercise in tramping the South Downs. My older brother, the late 'Alexander Crawford', also wrote some novels (*The Alias* etc.) which by now are almost forgotten. I trace my stock to the main stem of the Lindsays, whose history is in any book of Scottish families. Ivar, Jarl of the Norse Uplanders, is said to have been the original ancestor.

It's hardly revealing. After a bare bones outline, Lindsay first of all heads for generalities (what *is* "the usual amount of foreign travelling"?), then for misdirection (talking about his brother, followed by an ancestor who lived over a thousand years ago). As Gary K. Wolfe says in a review of Bernard Sellin's *Life & Works of David Lindsay*, "Readers of *A Voyage to Arcturus* are

almost inevitably intrigued by the kind of man who could have produced such a strange book… Surely, this strange and powerful thinker must have been a fascinating and remarkable individual." Yet, he goes on to say, the actual details of Lindsay's life, though they "do much to put our curiosity to rest… do not substantially explain his fiction".[1]

But, with Lindsay, it's the inner life of the author that would be the only thing to explain his fiction, and he was not, it seems, the sort to keep a diary, nor does he reveal a lot about himself in his few surviving letters or his epigrammatic "Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy". The novels themselves are the only real record we have of his inner life, and even then, it's not because they're explicitly autobiographical—it's *the fact that he wrote them* that gives us an indication of what must have been an intensely-felt inner life. Not knowing David Lindsay the man, it's impossible to judge what parts of his novels might reveal his character more than others, but if we want an inner portrait of David Lindsay *the writer*, we can perhaps find it in the opening chapter of his most well-known novel—just not in any one character.

To start with, for instance, we have Maskull, a man who has virtually no background—he has, he says, "neither wife, land, nor profession".[2] (The only detail we get about his life from before the novel begins is when, leaving the subterranean land of Threal by a dark tunnel, he's "reminded of the evil dreams of his childhood".[3] But even this can't be ascribed to Lindsay himself, as it's a lift from one of his favourite writers, George MacDonald, whose protagonist in the 1858 novel *Phantastes* enters a similar tunnel: "The roof sank lower and lower, until I was compelled, first to stoop, and then to creep on my hands and knees. It recalled terrible dreams of childhood..."[4]) Here, then, we have the day-to-day Lindsay of the outer world, the one who sought to represent himself in the autobiographical paragraphs above largely by saying nothing—because, to Lindsay himself, there was perhaps nothing to say, not about his worldly self, anyway.

For him, the inner life was everything, and that is most openly represented by the character who appears in the narrative at the same time as Maskull, Nightspore, for the two are part of one being: the outer and the inner man, starkly divided. (Maskull, we're later told by Krag, belongs to the worldly Crystalman, whereas "Nightspore is mine".[5]) But what do we learn about

Nightspore? Very little, other than that he is characterised by "an intense spiritual hunger",[6] a hunger that can only be answered by finding his true home in another realm of existence entirely. If this *is* a glimpse of Lindsay's inner life, it's not one that can be confirmed by any fact of his outward existence (except, perhaps, the anecdote about the moon told by E. H. Visiak—for which, see page 115).

There is, though, a third character in the opening chapter of *A Voyage to Arcturus* who has an evident relation to the man who wrote it. The medium Backhouse, who claims to "dream with open eyes… and others see my dreams",[7] is, effectively, the sort of artist or writer who sees their role as relating, with as little subjectivity or embellishment as possible, the visionary inner world they find within themselves—an inner world that appears, to them, to have an objective and separate reality. Backhouse's attitude to the apparitions he produces—that he is a mere conduit through which they emerge—echoes, I think, Lindsay's attitude to his own writing, and I go into this in more detail at the start of chapter 8.

Here, then, are three key aspects of David Lindsay: the idealised but unattached outer man, the intense inner man, and the artistic conduit by which the latter's visions reach the world of the former.

It is, though, possible to find more. Lindsay, for instance, was deeply affected by music, and the third person we meet in the novel, Mrs. Jameson, is initially encountered in a state of being overwhelmed by the music she has been playing. If it seems a stretch to attribute this minor character to an aspect of her author's inner nature, consider that this same scene—a person being momentarily overwhelmed by music—also occurs early on in *The Haunted Woman*, *Sphinx*, and *The Witch*. Publisher Victor Gollancz wrote that Lindsay was "really more a musician than a writer".[8]

And then there's Montague Faull, the indolent, sybaritic, and very much un-spiritual host of the séance, who has, when he sees Mrs Trent, something of the "concealed barbarian in the complacent gleam of his eye".[9] Surely this man, dedicated to smoking, drinking and women, can't be a portrait of the author? Yet E. H. Visiak, in his short essay "Lindsay as I knew him", says the author of *A Voyage to Arcturus* "enjoyed life; relished his food, his drink—especially ale in an inn—and his pipe",[10] while J. B. Pick describes him as,

like Faull, "a courteous and attentive host and fond of the company of women".[11] Lindsay, I am in no doubt, was no Montague Faull, but he certainly had a little of that fallen man within him.

Rather than go on, I'll make the obvious generality: the inner portrait of Lindsay is to be found throughout his books, but in no single character. And this, I think, may even be the ultimate power of his works: not just the ideas they relate, but the complex tensions, even antagonisms, between the many conflicting or competing outlooks and feelings that underlie them. As much as Nightspore needs to escape Crystalman's worldly realm, Maskull needs to *participate* in it—to, as Krag says, "run through the gamut" of worldly experiences.[12] David Lindsay was a complex man, and the works he created were similarly complex.

This biography has three main sources.

The first, without which it couldn't have been written, are the existing biographical works: J. B. Pick's "A sketch of Lindsay's life as man and writer", which was based on Pick's correspondence with Lindsay's wife, his friend Robert Barnes, and a few other primary sources; the first chapter of Bernard Sellin's *Life & Works of David Lindsay*, "The life and personality of the author"; and the sparser but more personal details to be found in E. H. Visiak's short essays on Lindsay, as well as the letters Lindsay wrote him. The present work began as an attempt to add some more facts, dates, names and background to the information these invaluable essays provide, as well as to iron out some of the differences. (Sellin, for instance, says that Pick's biography is "rudimentary, and, indeed, even inaccurate"[13]—though he doesn't say where or why, and I have certainly found Pick's the more reliable of the two—while Sellin's biography contains assertions that are better read as speculations, misses some of the details present in Pick's, and so on. Visiak, meanwhile, has a weakness for the well-turned anecdote that makes me a little suspicious of how polished some of his accounts may be.)

The second source is the wealth of family history records and the newspapers of the day that, through being available online, are now so much easier to check—even interrogate thoroughly—than they were in Pick's and Sellin's time. I've also looked in particular detail at the reviews Lindsay's works

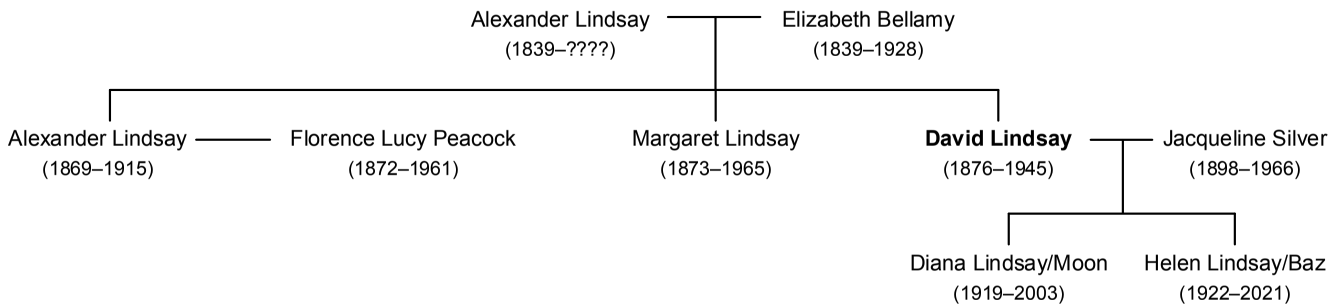
garnered, to give a more nuanced take on the idea that he was simply misunderstood during his own time—he wasn't. Rather, his works had a polarising effect that caused some to dismiss him entirely, others to be mystified, and others to find something of genuine worth in them. This is an effect that continues to this day.

Thirdly, I've provided a little more general historical and background information to place Lindsay's life in the context of his times.

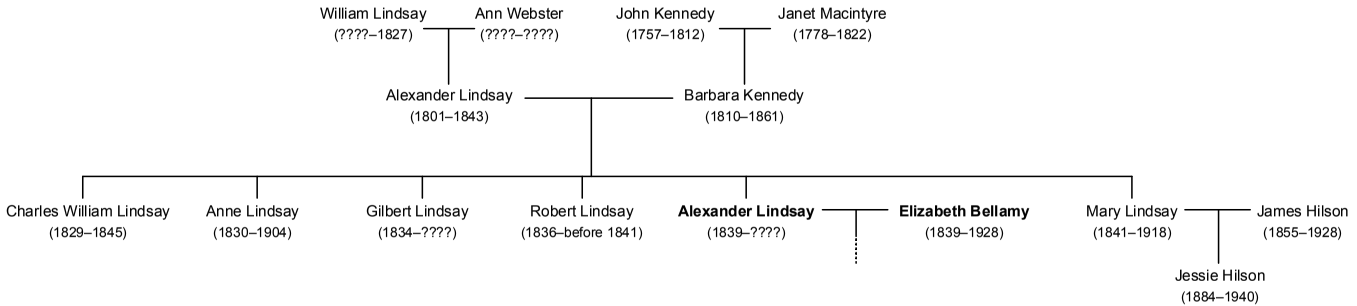
The result, which I intended to be a slightly longer version of the 3,000 word biographical essay I wrote for my site about Lindsay, VioletApple.org.uk, has somehow ended up being around 65,000 words. This is not because there are 62,000 words of revelations about David Lindsay's life—there certainly aren't—but there are a few new details and, at least, some definite dates and facts. There isn't, in the end, any explanation of how he came to write *A Voyage to Arcturus*, but I don't think there ever will be.

I have, throughout the biographical chapters in this book, referred to its subject as "David" rather than "Lindsay". Initially, this was because he was a child, and one Lindsay among others, so calling him "Lindsay" would have been confusing. After this, I stuck to it because, perhaps, it emphasised that this was the biography of the man, as well as of the author. I revert to "Lindsay" in the final chapter, which is about his works and reputation after his death, at which point he was *only* the author.

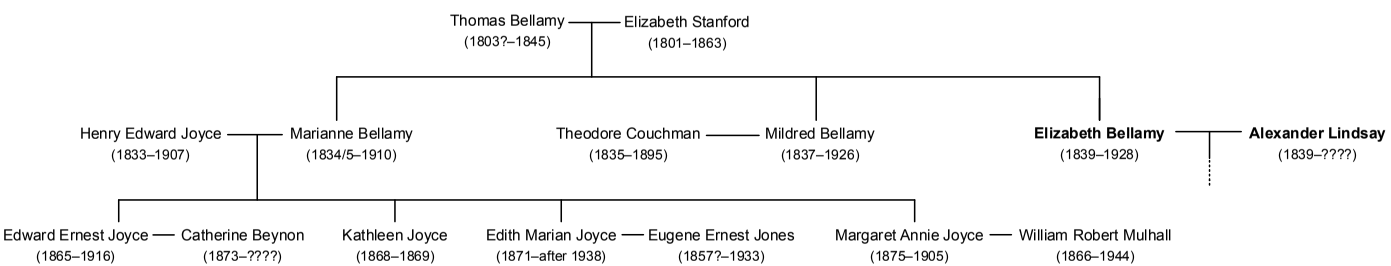
If you are interested in reading about Lindsay the man and no-one else, some chapters can be skipped. Chapter 1 deals with his family before his birth, and gives something of the character of the familial world he was born into; chapter 4 is about two events in the life of his brother Alexander, which surely influenced David himself and, as well as providing an interesting contrast to David's own life, cover a time in which we have little information about what he was doing, except working; chapter 14 provides a few rounding-off details to the lives of people who appear in this biography but survived its subject; and chapter 15 is about his posthumous reputation and the afterlife of his works, in particular the novel for which he is most well-known, *A Voyage to Arcturus*.


Alexander Lindsay
(1839–????)
Elizabeth Bellamy
(1839–1928)
Alexander Lindsay
(1869–1915)
Florence Lucy Peacock
(1872–1961)
Margaret Lindsay
(1873–1965)
David Lindsay
(1876–1945)
Jacqueline Silver
(1898–1966)
Diana Lindsay/Moon
(1919–2003)
Helen Lindsay/Baz
(1922–2021)

Paternal Line



Maternal Line



1

David's Parents and their Families

–1876

(As there was an Alexander Lindsay in each of the three generations covered in this chapter and the next, I have added a superscript to the name where there is any possibility of confusion: Alexander(G) *refers to David's paternal grandfather;* Alexander(F) *to his father, and* Alexander(B) *to his brother.)*

When David Lindsay was born on 3 March 1876, his parents Alexander and Elizabeth (née Bellamy) had been married for seven years. The marriage, like David's birth, took place in the district of Lewisham, a developing group of towns and villages that would, by the end of that century, form one continuous suburb of London, to the south of the Thames and west of Greenwich. Only a few years before, neither Alexander nor Elizabeth had been in Lewisham, nor London—Alexander had not even been in England. This chapter looks at where they came from, and their lives before they met and married.

David's father was born on 7 January 1839 in Edinburgh. *His* father (David's paternal grandfather), also called Alexander, had been born in 1801 in a Highland farmstead called Kirkton of Newdosk,[14] "adjoining the graveyard" of the ruined Newdosk Church, in the county of Angus.[15] The lands of Newdosk had been given by King David II of Scotland to Sir Alexander Lindsay of Crawford in 1365, whose son, David, became the 1st Earl of Crawford. The Lindsays of Newdosk, then, were related to the Earls of Crawford, a powerful line in Scotland (with many of their subsequent male line named either Alexander or David). They continued to hold Newdosk on and off for several centuries, but by the time David's paternal grandfather was born, it had been out of Lindsay hands for some time: Alexander(G)'s father,

William Lindsay, was not a noble, but a tenant farmer.

William had married Anne Webster, who bore him fourteen children (he also had one "natural"—illegitimate—daughter). The oldest of these was a boy, Robert Lindsay (born in 1797), and when Robert died in 1884 in the nearby town of Brechin, his obituary in the local paper noted that "His was a cadet branch of the great family whose records long formed a large part of the history of this locality",[16] so there was still considered to be a link, however distant, between David's family and the noble line of Lindsays. Both Robert and his younger brother Alexander(G) were sent to be educated in Edinburgh, but whereas Robert returned to the area of his birth to work as a bank clerk, Alexander(G) found employment in Edinburgh and remained in the city.

In 1820, Alexander(G) started work as a clerk and cashier for the firm of J. & R. Raimes & Company, a wholesale chemist and druggist, dealing in the patent medicines of the day: Grimstone's Aromatic Regenerator for the Growth of the Human Hair (which was additionally "a certain preventive of Head-ache and Fainting; also a toilet Perfume"), Butler's Cooling Aperient Powders (for digestive troubles), Moxon's Magnesian Aperient ("as a preventative for Piles"), Barker's Gout and Rheumatism Pills, Perry's Purifying Specific Pills ("an effectual remedy in all cases of stricture and diseases of the urinary organs"), Old Parr's Life Pills (which promised to cure coughs, nervous affections, costiveness, rheumatism, and scurvy), Concentrated Detersive Essence ("an anti-syphilitic remedy"), as well as Maw's Portable Domestic Injection Instrument, and S. Walker & Company's Chemically Prepared Gun Wadding. Their offices were at Smith Place, Leith Walk in Edinburgh, and Alexander(G) lived at either 1 or 2 Smith Place. (The company would change its name throughout the years, eventually becoming Raimes Clark & Co. Ltd, which trades today as Lindsay & Gilmour Pharmacies. The Lindsay in this name, coming from a chemist who opened his first pharmacy in 1826, appears to be unrelated to David.)

On 5 January 1829, Alexander(G) married Barbara Kennedy. She had been born on 2 June 1810 in Kenmore, a village at the northern end of Loch Tay in Perthshire. Her father, John Kennedy (1757–1812) has the modest fame of having a poem by Robert Burns dedicated to him. Essentially an invitation to share a drink, "To John Kennedy, Dumfries House" was part of a letter written on 3 March 1786 (a date which, ninety years later, would be David's

birthday), when Kennedy was land factor (estate manager) to the 6th Earl of Dumfries. Kennedy went on to work as land factor for the Earl of Breadalbane, and married Janet Macintyre (1778–1822), who owned a furniture shop in Kenmore, and with whom he had seven children, the youngest being Barbara. He retired to Edinburgh, and died there at the age of fifty five, being buried at the city's Old Calton Cemetery.

Alexander(G) and Barbara had six children: Charles William (born 1829), Anne (born 1830), Gilbert (born 1834), Robert (born 1836), Alexander(F) (born 1839), and Mary (born 1841). Of these, Charles died at the age of sixteen, and Robert even younger, as he's not present in the 1841 census, a mere five years after his birth. (Gilbert would also disappear from Scottish records in early adulthood, but a man of his name, age, and profession—he was a printer's compositor—entered America in 1853, so possibly he emigrated.)

Sadly, the marriage would be ended by Alexander(G)'s death at the age of forty two, on 15 January 1843, "much regretted by his friends and employers" (as his brief obituary says[17]). After this, Barbara, no longer at Smith Place but a number of different addresses throughout the city, made a living taking in lodgers.

David's father Alexander—three years and nine months old at the time of his own father's death—seems to have attended Hamilton Place Academy in Edinburgh (where, a few years later, Alexander Graham Bell would be a pupil), earning a prize in Practical Arithmetic in 1850. He entered the same profession as his father, becoming a mercantile clerk and working for his mother's side of the family in Aberdeen, where his uncle James John Kennedy (1803–1869) ran a wholesale grocery and was, coincidentally or not, agent for Raimes & Co. for the north of Scotland.

In 1861, Barbara Kennedy died from a disease of the liver. (Sellin says David inherited a liver complaint, "a particularly acute form of jaundice" that required a special diet,[18] and cites David's brother's death as also being down to this condition—though that was an illness of the spleen, whose effect spread to the liver. It's odd, though, that this special dietary requirement isn't mentioned in David's army health records, so it may not have been as binding as Sellin says.) By this point, Alexander(F)'s sisters Anne and Mary were working as a teacher and teacher's assistant, and would settle in the border

town of Jedburgh (initially living with an aunt on their mother's side, Jane Anne Kennedy (1805?–1893), who was also a teacher). This pair of aunts would be the only immediate relatives on David's father's side still alive and in Scotland during David's lifetime, and would later have some impact on his life.

Alexander(F)'s employer and uncle James John Kennedy fell ill in 1868. He rallied towards the end of the year, but then his wife died, after which he declined again, and died the following year. By this time, though, Alexander(F) was in London, marrying Elizabeth Bellamy. What had taken him there? It's possible it was, again, a family link, for another uncle on Alexander(F)'s mother's side was Gilbert Kennedy (1806–1877), a surgeon who lived and practiced in Hammersmith. Gilbert had been domestic surgeon to the Earl of Cadogan, something that served him in good stead when, as a private practitioner, he found himself embroiled in a scandal and court case in 1846. A live-in patient he was seeing through her final days died and some of her jewellery went missing. The fact that this included what was described in the papers as "a very massive gold chain",[19] given to her brother by King Ferdinand VII of Spain, only made the case more gossip-worthy when it went to court, with Gilbert and his assistant, Archibald McNeill, accused of pawning the valuables and taking the money. Gilbert was released—thanks in part to character-references from his gentlemen friends and the Earl of Cadogan—but McNeill was found guilty. McNeill was, however, released on a re-trial, so ultimately no culprit was named and punished. Throughout, Gilbert wrote several times to the papers, complaining of how he was being represented. (It would be interesting to know if David ever heard this story. Gilbert would retire to Jedburgh, where David would later spend time, so it's possible he may have, though not from the man himself.) This is the only family link I can find that may have drawn Alexander(F) to London—but it didn't require a family connection to do so, as London was, at the time, the commercial capital of the world, and the perfect place to seek employment. The one thing that *can* be said is that he was there by 1 October 1868, when he married Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Bellamy, generally known as Bessy, was the youngest of three

daughters born to Thomas and Elizabeth Bellamy. Thomas had been born in one of England's leading industrial centres, Birmingham, around 1803. He was a plumber and glazier (the two trades often being linked, as both involved working with lead). His wife, Elizabeth Stanford, was born in the village of Long Itchington, Warwickshire, around 1800 or 1801. The couple married in Birmingham on 20 May 1827, but would live in Leamington Spa, a popular holiday resort since the town's spa waters (which had been known in Roman times) were rediscovered in 1784. Queen Victoria holidayed there, and it became Royal Leamington Spa in 1838.

The couple lived on Regent Street, in the town's commercial centre, where Thomas had his glazier's shop, and Elizabeth ran a poulterer and fishmonger's, selling a wide variety of fish, game-birds and other meats, as described in the Christmas 1856 issue of *The Leamington Advertiser, and Beck's List of Visitors*:

> The shops of the several poulterers and fishmongers were exceedingly well-stored with the produce of the stream, field, and the wood.—Mrs. Bellamy's assortment, at 61, Regent Street, included one hundred turkeys, a like number of geese, two hundred rabbits, a large quantity of ducks and fowls, and fish of every variety. Among the fowls were some of the black-breasted game breed, weighing 6lbs each, reared by a Mr. A. Umbers, of Wappenbury. Several geese, purchased from Mr. Lythall, of Radford Hall, weighed upwards of 13lbs each; and there were four tame rabbits, weighing from 12 to 15lbs each.

By the time of this notice, the family had grown by three—the girls Mary Ann or Marianne (born 1834 or 1835), Mildred (born 1837), and Elizabeth or Bessy (born 1839)—but also, sadly, shrunken by one, as Thomas Bellamy died as a result of a head injury on the 13 February 1845. At this point, Bessy was five years old, only a little older than her future husband Alexander Lindsay was when *his* father died.

In 1860, the eldest of the Bellamy sisters married. The groom was Henry Edward Joyce, who was born in 1833 in the parish of St Nicholas in nearby Warwick. After learning his trade as a printer's compositor he'd moved to London, but nevertheless came back to his home county to marry a local girl.

It's worth noting his appearance in the story of David's family, as Henry Edward Joyce would become something of a motive force in the lives of the Bellamy sisters—and David.

For starters, having married one Bellamy sister, Henry seems to have had some involvement in the marriage of the second. On 14 August 1862, he would be a witness at Mildred's marriage to Theodore Couchman, another young printer living and working in London (born in 1835 in Marylebone, the son of a draper and travelling merchant). In fact, both Joyce and Couchman worked for the same firm, Spottiswoode & Co., and both played on the company's cricket team. (Spottiswoode & Co. is not the same as the more well-known Eyre & Spottiswoode, though the two companies were linked for a long time by family ties. The distinction was that Eyre & Spottiswoode had become printers to the King in 1770; Spottiswoode & Co. was created to retain a private printing business separate from the royally-appointed one. It was one of the largest printing firms in London at the time.)

Throughout the next few decades, all three Bellamy sisters would live close together, and Henry Edward Joyce, once he had risen in the ranks from printer's compositor to editor of *The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette*—a paper owned by Spottiswoode & Co., and which would merge with *Lloyd's List*, the organ of the city's insurance market—would involve himself in Lewisham's local politics, and the wider social life of his community. It seems highly likely it was Henry Edward Joyce who found David his first job, and it's quite possible he got David his place at school (David went to the same school as Joyce's boy, who was older). Henry was evidently a man of some ambition, who liked to help those connected with him.

Marianne and Mildred were now married and living in London. Bessy's move to the capital would be under sadder circumstances. Towards the end of 1863, their mother died. If Bessy had not already moved down to London to be with her sisters, she evidently did so now, for this is where she met and married David's father Alexander Lindsay.

2

Childhood

1876–1890

Alexander(F) and Bessy's first child was born on 24 July 1869, nine months and twenty three days after the couple's wedding. They named him Alexander, after his father and grandfather. At the time of their marriage, the couple were living at Warwick Villas in Hither Green (which is now part of Lewisham). By the time of the 1871 census, the Lindsays were at 3 Gye Cliffe Villas in Hither Green, along with a household servant and two paying lodgers; next door at 2 Gye Cliffe Villas was Bessy's sister Mildred and her husband Theodore Couchman; and at 1 Gye Cliffe Villas was the third sister, Marianne, and her husband Henry Edward Joyce, with their growing family (Edward Ernest, born in 1865, and their new baby Edith Marian; they'd had a daughter, Kathleen, in 1868, but she had died the following year). The Lindsays had a second child, this time a daughter, Margaret, on 14 August 1873. Two years later, the Joyces also had a daughter whom they named Margaret—Margaret Annie. Only one more child would be added to this roster of cousins (Mildred and Theodore having none): David, youngest of them all, was born on 3 March 1876.

At David's birth, the family were no longer at Gye Cliffe Villas, but a little further north, at 5 Llanberis Terrace, on Ryecroft Road in the village of Blackheath (also now part of Lewisham). It seems the family didn't stay there long, for by the time David's birth was registered they were a little further north still, on a steep new street running between Lewisham Road and Lewisham Hill called Blackheath Rise. Again, the three Bellamy sisters' families were living in three consecutive houses. The Joyces named theirs Warwick Villa, after the town where Henry Joyce was born and grew up. The Couchmans' home was Heathside Villa, likely a reference to its being close to

the heath from which both the village and Rise took their names, Black Heath. The Lindsays named their home Dunedin Villa, after Alexander(F)'s city of birth (Dùn Èideann being the Scottish Gaelic name for Edinburgh). To give an idea of the character of these houses, when Heathside Villa (by then known as 17 Blackheath Rise) was being sold in 1927, it was described as a "Semi-detached Residence, with good garden", having five bedrooms, a bathroom, two reception rooms, and ground-floor offices.[20]

David's father continued the work he'd done all his life, being listed as a "commercial clerk" in both the 1871 and 1881 censuses. In 1876, one Alexander Lindsay gave evidence in a trial at the Old Bailey, in his role as a insurer's book-keeper. He speaks merely to identify a cheque as being authentically issued by his employers, but if this is David's father (and it seems likely it is), then the firm he worked for was the Imperial Marine Insurance Company. Formed in 1871, though effectively taking on the business, in an expanded form, of the Liverpool Marine Insurance Company, it had offices in London from 1874, initially at 4 Royal Exchange Buildings (the home of Lloyd's of London), then 8 Finch Lane in 1876, then back to Royal Exchange Buildings—this time number 1—in 1879. (A Melbourne branch also opened in 1874.)

As well as his day job, Alexander(F) took on a sideline as secretary to the Lee, Lewisham, and Blackheath Permanent Building Society, which was established "for the purpose of offering a safe and profitable investment for large or small savings, and to enable its members to become their own landlords upon more advantageous terms than can be obtained in other Societies".[21] An 1885 advert, signed "A. Lindsay, Secretary" promises "To Borrowers—Prompt advances, moderate repayments, low legal charges. To Shareholders—Shares accumulate at Six per cent compound interest. To Depositors—Good interest, absolute security."[22] That this *was* but a sideline is indicated by the business hours: Tuesday nights, between 8 and 9 p.m. But it shows that Alexander(F) was making an effort to better himself and his family beyond his clerk's salary. The society's chairman was Alexander(F)'s brother-in-law Theodore Couchman. (This building society would continue to operate until April 1961, when it became part of the Greenwich Building Society.)

The first census in which David Lindsay appears is in 1881. His two

siblings are listed as scholars. The eldest, Alexander[B], then eleven years of age, had been attending nearby Colfe's Grammar School since January the preceding year. (And the eldest cousin, Edward Ernest Joyce, had been at the same school since 1873.) David, not yet old enough for Colfe's, would soon be attending either a local primary school, or might have been educated at home, as was common among the middle classes at the time.

Colfe's Grammar School had been founded in 1652 by the Reverend Abraham Colfe (1580–1657), the vicar of Lewisham. By the time David attended, the headmaster was the Reverend Thomas Bramley (1834–1896), who had started at the school in 1867, and would continue to preside throughout David's time there, finally retiring in 1895. The funding of the school—or the managing of the bequest left by the Reverend Colfe—was in the hands of the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, a trade guild which had been given its Royal Charter in 1444 (and is still going today). One of the things the Leathersellers did with the Reverend Colfe's bequest was to offer scholarships to promising boys from local primary schools who wished to attend Colfe's, and to pupils already at the school with a noteworthy academic record. The Leathersellers themselves didn't decide who to award, this was left to the Lewisham Vestry, a small council of elected men who decided on a number of local matters (and would eventually be replaced by the Borough Council). David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce was one such vestryman, and was on the council when it came time to decide if David could have a scholarship. A number of boys were presented, and the Vestry voted on whom they thought the most deserving. As is often the case, the meeting was reported in the local papers (in this case *The Sydenham, Forest Hill & Penge Gazette*, for 18 July 1885). During the meeting, one member, a Mr Trenchard, says he had promised to vote for David Lindsay—surely at the prompting of Henry Edward Joyce, who presumably couldn't vote for his own nephew—but had changed his mind for a boy who was clearly more in need. The youngster in question was "a poor boy... [whose] father had deserted his family, and left his wife an inmate of a lunatic asylum." His name was Alexander F. V. Courtenay, the son of a pharmacist who had, interestingly, lived at 5 Llanberis Terrace, David's birthplace, in 1876—presumably after the Lindsays, though it seems to have been divided into two flats, so perhaps he was even living there when David was born. On this

occasion, Alexander F. V. Courtenay was awarded a scholarship; none of the twenty six vestrymen voted for David.

Nonetheless, David attended Colfe's, and *did* later win a scholarship, as he has the initials "F. S." by his name in the school's Roll Book, for "Foundation Scholar". This scholarship granted David an exemption from half the school's fees, and was earned through his own academic work (or, "Elected on Examiner's Report", as it was put) rather than a Vestry vote. (Alexander F. V. Courtenay, by contrast, received a Parish Scholarship, which paid his entire school fee plus £5.)

David started at Colfe's in May 1885. His brother Alexander finished his own time there only two months later, a reminder of how far apart they were in age. As part of their role governing the school, the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers attended an annual "Visitation" at Colfe's, during which speeches were made, reports delivered, and prizes handed out. The pupils would entertain the gathered teachers, governors, and parents with a variety of musical performances, poetry and prose recitations, and theatrical scenes. At the 1885 Visitation that July, Alexander(B) received a Senior prize for French, and he and three other pupils performed "a few scenes from [Molière's] *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, in French, the characters being sustained in a manner that evoked hearty applause".[23]

What sort of a school was Colfe's at this time? Its motto, on the cap of every boy who attended (and it was a boys-only school), was "All praise to God alone". (At an 1889 prize-giving, one of the Masters of the Leathersellers gave a speech in which he said: "the foundation of all sound education is religion."[24]) It advertised its curriculum as comprising "Classics, Mathematics, Modern Languages, and the ordinary English subjects".[25] The staff during David's time included a German master, French master, Drawing master, Science master, a master who taught Shorthand and Singing, and Colour-Sergeant F. A. Clarke, who was the "Drill and Playground Master" (i.e., physical education, which often comprised cross-country runs, no doubt utilising the nearby Black Heath). Other subjects that appeared in lists of prizes given during this time include Elocution and Maps.

Something more of the school's character might be adduced from the published writings of another pupil, though one who attended a generation after David. Henry Williamson, most well-known as the author of *Tarka the*

Otter, called the school "Colham Grammar School" in his autobiographical novel *The Beautiful Years* (1921). There he points out its lack of snobbery:

> As the majority of its scholars were drawn from those classes for whom a strictly classical education was waived in favour of one more utilitarian, atypic youths leaving at the age of sixteen or seventeen in no way varied from other members of the class of commercial folk, estate agents, lesser impoverished gentry, smaller solicitors and doctors, poor clergymen, to which they belonged. No distinct 'tone' was acquired: the types were too diverse, consequently the soft dialect of the yeoman farmer's son was not alchemised into the clearer speech of the doctor's boy; nor was the enunciation of the doctor's son perverted to that drawling articulation so much coveted by illiterate snobs who desire so fervently that their sons should be varnished with the Oxford manner. Every type maintained its own peculiarities and characteristics, nor was the new boy ostracised, because his father was a tradesman. No standards of gentility were enforced among its population; the term *It is not done* had never stained its vocal escutcheon…[26]

But this is not to imply the Victorian-era school David attended was wholly enlightened. Pupils' reminiscences of their time there, though sepia-tinted with an air of "the best days of their lives", almost always include mention of that constant of Victorian education, corporal punishment. Of the Reverend Bramley, for instance, one student reminisced:

> One remembers his chastisements at Scripture lessons, your head chopped both sides by his fat long hands, while he, laughing, said "stopid fellow."[27]

Another recalls the assistant master, the Reverend W. Hook Longsdon (known as "Hooky" to his pupils) caning him for lighting the fire in the bitterly cold room in which they were being taught, then asking "Still cold?"[28] Bramley was actually taken to court at least once, in 1882, for a

caning which the judge finally deemed "severe" but "not excessive";[29] he was not charged. (At this time, David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce wrote a letter to the London *Daily Chronicle*, proclaiming his support of the Reverend.)

Colfe's stood on Lewisham Hill, a few minutes' walk from David's home at Blackheath Rise. But, during his time there, the decision was made to completely rebuild, and so, after the July 1888 Visitation, the school moved to a temporary site at Cliff House, near St Mary's Church (where David's parents were married), about twenty minutes' walk from his home, where it would remain until his last year at the school.

It's obvious from Colfe's motto, and the speech comment about education quoted above, that religion was a fundamental part of David's school life. But how strong an element was it at home? Sellin mentions the strict observance of going to church three times every Sunday,[30] but it's possible he was talking about the general church-going habits of the day—we can't be sure the Lindsay family, if they *did* go to church three times each Sunday, were doing so out of religious feeling or merely following the social convention. Pick writes that David was a "man of Scottish Calvinist background",[31] but, outwardly at least, the Lindsay family in Lewisham seem to fit the middle-class religious mainstream of the day. David's parents married in an Anglican Church, and his politically active uncles involved themselves in the religious life of the community only to the extent that they did the social, the two being hard to separate in the Victorian age. David's aunt Mildred (with whom the Lindsay family would soon be living) perhaps had a religious bent, as after the death of her husband she paid for a stained glass window to be installed at St Swithun's Church in Hither Green, but that might just as easily be an act of commemoration or charity. The fact she would later be elected president of the Lewisham Cycle Club proves she wasn't some forbidding religious presence. Sellin writes of how, bored in church, the young David would sometimes tie his aunt's shawl to her chair, which she wouldn't notice till she tried to get up[32]—not something, surely, that someone with a strict religious attitude would tolerate. It seems, anyway, that Mildred and Bessy also attended séances, and Robert Barnes says Bessy and her daughter Margaret would later make use of a planchette,[33] again implying they did not have the sort of strict religious attitudes that would turn the adult David against church-going entirely.

(And his own attitude towards séances, if it isn't clear from the opening chapter of *Arcturus*, is laid out in one of his "Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy", the collection of aphorisms and ideas he noted down around the time he was working on his first published novel: "It is a serious thing to invoke in cold blood the world of spirits, believing it to be really existing. Table-turning, etc., is utterly antagonistic to the solemn and deadly earnestness of such a belief."[34])

Except insofar as Calvinism had crept into the general religious temperament of the times, then (and it was certainly stronger in Scotland, and so, presumably, in David's father's upbringing), it doesn't seem we can say David's home life in Lewisham was explicitly informed by those sort of over-strict religious feelings. But there is, undeniably, a deep, if unconventional, religious seriousness in his novels. Aside from his own natural temperament, then, where might it have come from? There is, it turns out, another candidate for the role of a strict religious influence on the young David.

In August 1887, among the holidaymakers at the northern border town of Spittal (whose most famous draw was the nearby Holy Island, Lindisfarne) were "Mr and Mrs James Hilson, Miss Hilson, Miss Lindsay, Kenmore Bank, Jedburgh; Miss Lindsay, Mr David Lindsay, Lewisham, Kent."[35] Here, then, are the young David and his sister Margaret holidaying with a family from Jedburgh. In fact, James Hilson was part of a prominent Jedburgh family, whose great grandfather had founded a woollen mill, which branched into several woollen mills in the subsequent generations, becoming a major employer in the town. In 1882, James Hilson married Mary Lindsay, David's aunt on his father's side. Mary had been making a living as a teacher's assistant at the time, along with her older sister Anne, who was a teacher. The two women had moved to the Scottish border town of Jedburgh sometime by 1871, and after teaching for a while at a local school formed their own, the "Miss Lindsays' School", a "Boarding and Day Establishment for Young Ladies", which they took over from its previous mistress (a Miss Elliot) in 1873. When Mary married James Hilson, she was forty one years old and he was twenty six, and as a mark of the respect in which he held his wife, James added her name to his, and was known thereafter as James Lindsay Hilson. The Miss Lindsays' school was closed, and Anne Lindsay—by this point fifty one years old—moved in with the couple, and remained with them until her

death in 1904. Only one more family member was required to fill out that 1887 holiday-making group, and this was Miss Hilson: the couple's only child, Jessie Elizabeth Barbara Hilson, who was born in 1884, and so was three years old at the time of the holiday.

James Lindsay Hilson is of a type, along with David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce, who thrived in the late Victorian world. Both men were successful in their careers and safely ensconced, financially, in the middle classes, and both threw their considerable energies into the communities they belonged to, as part of the era's idea of "public duty". Henry Edward Joyce, as already mentioned, became a local vestryman, but also a parish warden, a member of the Lewisham Board of Works, chairman of the Lewisham Conservative Club, president of the Lewisham Swimming Club, a member of the Council of the Corporation of Printing Trade Charities, and was also a notable Mason. (He was, for instance, given the rare honour of being elected Worshipful Master of the United Pilgrims Lodge twice in a row, and was then installed as the first Worshipful Master of the St. Stephens Lodge, which was founded in 1892.) He was the sort of man who was often in the local papers giving speeches—usually to thank some visiting dignitary for *their* speech—being voted onto councils, opening new swimming baths or distributing charity to the poor. Due to his being editor of *The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette and Lloyd's List*, he was even elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1892.

James Lindsay Hilson

Similarly, James Lindsay Hilson, as well as being the manager of a woollen

mill, was a long-time local councillor, and the list of additional societies and organisations he was involved in is impressive, including the Jedburgh Liberal Association, the Roxburgh Liberal Association (of which he was at one point secretary), the Jedburgh Rambler's Club (vice-president at its inception, later Honorary Secretary and Treasurer), the Jedburgh Musical Association (as secretary) and the Jedburgh Literary Association, an original committee member of the Jedburgh Christian Fellowship Union, conductor of the Band of Hope, member of the Jedburgh Gospel Temperance Union, the Jedburgh Abbey United Free Church, and the Mutual Improvement Association. It can be hard, in the Victorian era, to separate the religious from the merely communal, but some of these organisations (the Band of Hope, the Temperance Union) were particularly associated with both religious belief and temperance (i.e., abstinence from alcohol), implying a strength of belief and a degree of censoriousness that might well have its roots in Scottish Calvinism. And the same was true of his wife. At the time of their marriage, Mary Lindsay was described as "a devoted worker amongst the young", helping to organise "praise meetings", and working for the "Sabbath School".[36]

It seems, then, that whatever the religious quality of David's home life at Lewisham, there was a stronger, perhaps stricter element when he came into contact with his Scottish relatives. And there was soon—less than a year after that August 1887 holiday—reason for him to be that much more in contact with them:

> MISSING.—On Tuesday, April 17, Alexander Lindsay left his office in the City, about 6.30 p.m., but never reached his home, and has not been heard of since. His friends know of nothing whatever to account for his disappearance. His description is as follows:—Age 49, height 5 feet 6 inches, fair complexion, grey eyes, brown hair, turning to grey, high bald forehead, moustache, and close-cut beard, quite grey. Dress—Black diagonal cloth coat and vest, grey trousers, brown overcoat, hard brown felt hat. From his known tastes it is supposed that he may be walking through the country from village to village or round the coast. Anyone who can give information respecting the

above is requested to kindly communicate with the Editor of the *Shipping Gazette*, 54, Gracechurch-street, E.C.

This notice appeared in several papers local to Lewisham, including *The Kentish Mercury* (for Friday 4 May 1888), *The Woolwich Gazette* (the same day) and *The Sydenham, Forest Hill & Penge Gazette* (for Saturday 5 May). It also appeared in *The Shipping Gazette and Lloyd's List*, whose editor, mentioned as the point of contact, was David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce. It would go on to be reprinted in papers throughout Britain, including *The Eastern Morning News*, *South Wales Daily News*, *South Wales Echo*, *Aberdeen Press*, *Lancashire Evening Post* and *The Belfast News-Letter*.

By this time, Alexander(F) hadn't been seen for more than two weeks. The family began to wonder if he'd been involved in an accident and killed. And they would continue to do so until much later they received, as Pick describes it, "a photograph sent from Canada, which showed him surrounded by a second brood."[37] He had, then, simply abandoned his family.

There's no record of when this photograph arrived, so no way of knowing how long Bessy and her children were kept in suspense. The "second brood" implies it was a matter of years, not weeks or months, unless he had already started that family elsewhere. Family history records only raise more questions. In the 1891 census, for instance—three years after the disappearance—Bessy is recorded as a married woman, not a widow. But does this mean she knew, by this point, that Alexander(F) was alive and in Canada, or did she *not* know and so felt unable to call herself a widow without a body to bury? When David's brother came to be married in 1895, his father is noted as being a "clerk, deceased", and in the 1901 census, Bessy is a widow. But this could still mean they hadn't heard from Alexander(F), and simply assumed he was dead by this point; or, knowing he had abandoned them, now treated him as dead. Whether they were ever informed of his death, and when that death occurred, is not recorded.

A far more intriguing question is why Alexander(F) did what he did. From the notice of his disappearance, it's evident he was something of a wandering soul, perhaps unpredictably so ("he may be walking through the country from village to village or round the coast"). Did the family wait two weeks

before placing the newspaper notice because he'd disappeared before? Did this mean he had an innate need to escape from his home life? He had already left Scotland for England, and now he'd left England for Canada: was it sheer restlessness, then, an inability to fit in with a family, or to remain in one place? (It's perhaps worth noting that, at the time of his disappearance, his eldest son was now earning a wage, raising the possibility Alexander(F) might have wanted to leave for some time, but waited until he was sure his family wouldn't be entirely destitute.)

If Alexander(F) *was* working for the Imperial Marine Insurance Company, a factor that may have influenced his decision to leave the country and start again somewhere else is that this company announced it was to wind up its business as far back as 1881, but it was not fully liquidated until 1892. Between these two dates, then, its employees might well have felt their financial status to be at constant risk, adding to any other stresses Alexander(F) might have been experiencing.

It's possible to speculate endlessly, with so little to go on. None of the Alexander Lindsays in the various censuses and records for Canada at the time match David's father—but, if he started a new life, he might well have changed his name. His fate, then, seems to be irrecoverable from the records alone.

Another question is, why Canada? It was a destination that had been heavily promoted throughout Britain as a place to emigrate, particularly to the Scots in the days of the Highland Clearances (which continued into 1860, and so throughout most of Alexander(F)'s time in his native country). Canada offered the opportunity for tenant farmers to own their own land for the first time, and government agents actively proselytised emigration there, so as to populate its extensive prairies. It might well have been seen, then, by the likes of Alexander, as a land of new starts. One possibility is that Alexander(F) joined his younger brother Gilbert, who seems to have entered America in 1853, and so may have then headed north to Canada—but this is, again, pure speculation on my part. All that can really be known is that he left David's life abruptly, without explanation or farewell.

Aside from the practical implications of losing the family's prime breadwinner, the impact on David must have been profound. (At a crude level, it's tempting to read *A Voyage to Arcturus*'s narrative of a deceptive

godlike figure, and its philosophical overturning of how the world seems to be, as rooted in this shock of early paternal betrayal.) And perhaps, consciously or not, this moment does have an explicit echo in at least one part of *Arcturus*: when Gleameil announces she's going to cross the Sinking Sea to visit Swaylone's Island to hear the fascinating but dangerous music of that isle on its native soil, her husband Polecrab insists she first say goodbye to her children—three children, just as David, his sister and brother were three. Such a farewell, of course, was a scene never played out in David's own life, but in a sense that makes its poignance all the stronger:

> The second boy's face became suddenly inflamed.
>
> "Is she going of her own choice?" he inquired.
>
> "Yes," replied the father.
>
> "Then she is bad." He brought the words out with such force and emphasis, that they sounded like the crack of a whip.
>
> The old man cuffed him twice. "Is it your mother you are speaking of?"
>
> The boy stood his ground, without change of expression, but said nothing.[38]

At the time of Alexander(F)'s disappearance, David was just over six weeks past his twelfth birthday. He continued going to school. The new school buildings not yet having been opened, the 1889 Visitation Day was held in the grand saloon of the Crystal Palace, where David received a Commendation in Mathematics. In August of the same year, he can be found holidaying once more with his Jedburgh relatives in Spittal.

Colfe's new buildings were opened on 13 May 1890, and at that year's Visitation, David received prizes for Mathematics, Writing and English Literature, and commendations for "General Work", French and Maps. Unlike his brother, he isn't mentioned as being part of any of the recitations or theatrical scenes. This was his final year at Colfe's. The Old Roll Book notes his leaving date as December 1890. (It's perhaps worth noting that, at subsequent "Old Boys" dinners of the Abraham Colfe Club—where, for instance, the Alexander F. V. Courtenay mentioned above is noted as

attending—David is never listed. This, potentially, tells us something of how he felt about his old school, or perhaps social occasions generally.)

He would have been fourteen years old on leaving. Education in England at the time was only compulsory to the age of ten. David's brother Alexander had remained at Colfe's until he was sixteen, but the family situation was different then. David was more academically successful than his brother, but if his education was to continue, it would have to be paid for, and keeping him in school would also be depriving the family of a much-needed wage. As in the early days of her marriage, Bessy was back to taking in lodgers.

According to Pick, David "had won a scholarship to the University, and would have liked to go, but was not allowed to do so by his grandmother, who was responsible for the family at that time."[39] It's possible the scholarship referred to wasn't to university, but was the Foundation Scholarship that would allow him to continue at Colfe's to the age of sixteen or even eighteen, at which point he would be ready to go to university. The reference to his grandmother, though, is the great puzzle, as all of David's grandparents were dead by the time he was born. It's possible, though, that this may be referring to the oldest of his Scottish aunts, Anne Lindsay, who by this point was sixty years old. And it's likely the Lewisham Lindsays would have applied to the Jedburgh Lindsay Hilsons for help at this point, perhaps hoping they might to some extent fund David's education in some way—after all, this predicament was all down to the disappearance of Alexander(F), and he was *their* side of the family.

Pick and Sellin both state that David was educated for a while at a secondary school in Scotland; David himself mentions being educated in Scotland in his brief biographical piece (see Introduction). No records currently exist to say when he was there, but Scotland had a higher age of statutory education than England (thirteen, as opposed to ten), so perhaps this could have been taken advantage of. (It's even possible his older aunt, Anne, who had been a teacher, took on his education, though boys of secondary school age seem not to have been taught by women at the time.)

It's perhaps at this time that an incident occurred when David got into trouble swimming in a river as a youth in Scotland. His boy companions seemed to think he was joking and didn't help. He struggled to the bank, but, as Pick says, "They may have thought he was play-acting, but Lindsay never

play-acted and he never forgave them."[40] It's hard to read this anecdote and not think of Maskull's struggles to swim in the Sinking Sea in *A Voyage to Arcturus*.

Whatever help in furthering his education David received in Scotland, it would not extend to university. The family—whether the Lindsays or the Lindsay Hilsons or both—decided David was now required as a wage-earner.

3

Work

1891–1903

The 1891 census (carried out on 5th April) shows all three of the Lindsay children working. Alexander, now twenty one, is clerk to an insurance broker; Margaret, now seventeen, is a Post Office sorter—in fact working for the Post Office Savings Bank in Central London; and David, now fifteen, is clerk in a newspaper office (a job he doubtless got through one of his uncles).

At some point, David changed job, and like his brother worked for an insurance company, the Lloyd's underwriter Price Forbes. (Sellin says he began working for Price Forbes in 1894—so, at the age of eighteen—but goes on to say he "accepted this new profession with the versatility of a sixteen-year-old boy",[41] which implies 1892. Price Forbes didn't exist as a company until 1893, when the two firms of Charles Price & Son and T. L. Forbes & Son merged, though David could have started work for one of the two beforehand.)

Lloyd's at this point was the centre of the world's insurance market. Its origins lie in 1734, when coffee house proprietor Edward Lloyd started publishing a regular sheet of shipping news that eventually became *Lloyd's List* (which merged into the paper David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce edited, *The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette*, in 1878). Lloyd's of London (to give it its proper name) was established at the Royal Exchange in 1774, as a marketplace within which underwriters—the people who put up the money to back insurance policies—could compete or collaborate in business. Initially focused entirely on marine policies, it opened up to other forms of insurance in 1877. (Price Forbes would separate itself from its own marine insurance department in 1906, handing that part of the business to W. E. Keville & Co.)

David's first role at Price Forbes was as an office boy, but he worked his way up to being a clerk. Monday to Saturday, he would have taken the short walk from Blackheath Rise to Lewisham Station, and there caught the train which, in twenty minutes, would have brought him to the city centre, perhaps alongside his sister whose place of work was less than a mile from Price Forbes' offices.

Where exactly did David work? Although Price Forbes had several offices during his time at the firm, these were not held concurrently. For the bulk of his employment, their offices were at 7 Poultry, part of the Lloyd's buildings (pre-merger, these were held by Charles Price & Son from 1870, then by the amalgamated firm until 1905), after which they moved to 1 Cornhill (from 1905 to 1912), then 3 Lothbury (1912 to 1928, by which time David had left). All of these were within a couple of hundred metres of Lloyd's. It's worth noting that, before the firms merged, T. L. Forbes & Son's offices were at 17 Gracechurch Street, while David's uncle Henry Edward Joyce was editing *The Shipping & Mercantile Gazette* at 54 Gracechurch Street, which points to the possibility that Joyce might have known Forbes—it would certainly have been his *business* to know a marine insurer, even if only in passing—so could have found David a position with T. L. Forbes & Son just before its merger.

The offices at 7 Poultry were a single first floor room, partitioned into six compartments. The firm shared a lobby and toilet with the other tenants of the building. At the time of the newly-merged company, their total number of employees and partners was less than a dozen. David worked in a space with four or five others, all of them sitting on high stools at their desks, like an adult version of the desk David would have used at school. And there would probably have been an air of discipline scarcely lighter than school (corporal punishment being replaced by the threat of dismissal), certainly until David was established as an adult employee.

At first his duties would have involved running errands and taking letters to the post office. Later, he'd have copied correspondence into a record book in the neat copperplate demanded of all clerks, checked figures in ledgers, and written receipts. By the end of his time at the firm, he had—ironically, considering his later money troubles—come to specialise in financial problems, and all cheques and related correspondence passed through his

hands. By specialisation, a clerk could become invaluable to his employers, and clerks were often encouraged to, for instance, learn foreign languages or improve their understanding of certain areas of business. By this means, a clerk could ensure that, as technology changed—as laboriously handwritten letters were replaced by typed ones, with duplicating paper removing the need to manually copy them, as calculating machines sped up the process of checking figures, as automatic addressing machines replaced the need to handwrite envelopes, and as telephones replaced the need to run messages (Price Forbes got its first in 1895)—they would retain their jobs, and even progress within the office. (All of these innovations occurred during David's time as a clerk.) And, unlike labourers or manual workers, clerks had a chance of promotion into managerial roles. R. F. A. Riesco, a director at Price Forbes from 1912 to 1954, himself started as "a very junior clerk".[42]

As one of London's clerks, David was part of the largest class of male employees in the largest city in the world—the nexus of the British Empire and its rapidly-growing commercial concerns, which depended on efficient record-keeping. David was good at his job. He was punctilious, professional and courteous, if somewhat reserved. Supposedly, he kept a novel at his desk, to be opened once the day's work was done, a hint of the imaginative and intellectual life within.

What do we know of David's reading? He would later tell his friend E. H. Visiak that George MacDonald was the writer who'd had the greatest influence on him,[43] and certainly MacDonald's career-bracketing adult fairy tales *Phantastes* (1858) and *Lilith* (1895)—the latter of which came out when David was nineteen—feel close in many ways to David's own career-bracketing novels, *A Voyage to Arcturus* and *The Witch*. MacDonald himself was influenced in the writing of these two books by the German Romantics, and David seems to have read these extensively, too, including Schiller, Novalis, Tieck and Goethe (whose *Wilhelm Meister* he mentions in one of his letters to Visiak). He apparently taught himself German to read these in the original, as well as works by Hegel, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, and the mystic Jacob Boehme.

He was familiar with Shakespeare (whether through reading or attending the theatre, or both), knew *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* enough to refer to one of its verses in *The Haunted Woman*, and at some point read enough

Blake to feel "a sort of uneasiness with his work"[44] due to an inability to connect with it as he could with Beethoven's music; generally, he seems not to have liked poetry.

In *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*, David has the eponymous protagonist mention Diogenes Laertius, "who gives such an excellent account of the Cynic Antisthenes",[45] which surely means David must have read his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, and no doubt other classical authors too (Plato is mentioned in the "Sketch Notes"). Among English-speaking essayists and philosophers, he admired the works of Thomas Carlyle (who had translated the German Romantics) and Emerson. Gary K. Wolfe mentions that he had, in his library, F. Max Muller's *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* (1894), showing he had an interest in non-Western philosophies. Montaigne is another essayist mentioned in his fiction, either read in French or translation.

He was also fond of the adventure novels of the day, many of which ventured into the fantastic, including the works of Jules Verne, H. Rider Haggard—*She* (1887) seems to have been his favourite of Haggard's—Walter Scott, Alexandre Dumas, H. G. Wells, and Robert Louis Stevenson—whose 1892 novel *The Wrecker*, co-authored with Stevenson's stepson Lloyd Osbourne, was David's favourite among that author's works. Balzac was another, with *Chicot the Jester* (also known as *La Dame de Monsoreau*) and *Droll Stories* both being mentioned in David's own fiction.

According to his friend Robert Barnes, David considered *Wuthering Heights* the greatest English novel, and keenly admired W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions* (1904), both of which are intense love stories much concerned with landscape, and bordering on the fantastic (linking them, perhaps, to David's own *Devil's Tor*). He had read *Moby Dick* (calling it "a fascinating and impossible medley" in a letter to Visiak[46]) and Conrad. He had an evident familiarity with the Russian novelists, too, certainly Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Turgenev, all of whom enjoyed a surge in popularity in the first decade of the twentieth century. And he liked the Norse Sagas, which had received a boost among English readers thanks to the translations of William Morris in collaboration with Eiríkr Magnússon. David's use of the phrase "trolls and blendings" in *The Haunted Woman* seems to imply he'd read G. A. Hight's 1914 translation for Everyman of *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*, who seems to

have been the only one of these early translators to use the term "blending" for what was usually rendered "half-troll".

He liked to read history, with the Roman Empire (in *Devil's Tor* he mentions the German classical scholar Theodor Mommsen, author of a three-volume *History of Rome* (translated into English from 1862)) and memoirs of the court-life of eighteenth century France being two areas of particular interest (the latter, surely, deriving from an early love of Dumas). In one of his letters to Visiak, he refers to Gaston Maspero as "the great expert" on Egyptology thanks to his *Art in Egypt* (1912). Among writers on music, he mentions George Grove, and alludes to the latter's classifications of Beethoven's symphonies as set out in *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies* (1896).

Beyond their dates of publication, we don't know when he read these works, though it seems likely the adventure novels came before the German philosophers. And, to cover what he *hadn't* read, he admitted in a letter to Visiak being unfamiliar with most modern literature—he hadn't read Walter de la Mare, for instance, when Visiak offered to share the "Sketch Notes" with him in 1922—but would, in later years, prove to have read Kafka (translated into English in the 1930s), and recommend that Visiak read Joseph Hergesheimer's 1932 family-saga *The Limestone Tree*.

With three young wage-earners, the Lindsay household was back on a more stable footing (there's no lodger in the 1891 census), but 1895 would see two events that led to further changes.

First of all, in February, David's uncle Theodore Couchman (who lived next door at 7 Blackheath Rise) died of influenza, aged fifty nine. In his obituaries, he was noted as being "for many years the confidential and valued servant of Messrs. Spottiswoode & Co.", and an "esteemed member of the Lewisham Board of Works".[47] To a somewhat quieter extent than David's other uncle, Theodore had involved himself in local politics as well as establishing himself in a solid career. When he died, he left his widow Mildred an estate worth £2,118 (about £230,000 in 2024). He was buried in Ladywell Cemetery, with a monument that would later accommodate his widow, as well as David's mother Bessy and brother Alexander.

The other event of 1895 was Alexander's marriage. Since putting on those "few scenes from *Les Fourberies de Scapin*" at his final Visitation Day at Colfe's, Alexander had evidently needed a new outlet for his extraverted energies. Around 1890, he joined the Argus Bicycle Club, based in Brockley, just over a mile from Lewisham. This was the Golden Age of Cycling, with the Rover Safety Bicycle in 1885 being the first recognisably modern bicycle, its chain-driven action, rear-wheel drive, and two wheels of the same size (not as cumbersome to mount or turn as the penny-farthing) being completed by pneumatic tyres soon after. As well as taking an enthusiastic part in the sporting aspect of the hobby (Alexander was announced to have the highest attendance for cycle runs in 1898)—including the 50-mile road race, and the 12-hour ride—the Bicycle Club provided plenty of opportunities for socialising. There was an annual dinner, as well as regular "At Home" events held at local inns, hotels, and public houses, where around 150 people would meet, sing songs, and—an echo of that Visitation Day—put on short plays and farces. (Alexander, of course, took part in these.) There were also "Bohemian Concerts", the "Smoker" (probably male-only), and the "Cinderella Ball". These events were all reported in local papers, and Alexander can be found not just taking part in the farces, but acting as a steward and, later, captain of the club, as well as, for a couple of years, being the editor of *The Argus Bicycle Club Gazette*, to which he contributed a humorous serial novel, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pilkington Bicycle Club* (left unfinished when the *Gazette* switched to a single sheet newsletter). There was evidently a lot of youthful energy about the Bicycle Club, so it's no surprise to find that, unusually for the Victorian Age, it was one to which both men and women could belong. (At the 1898 annual meeting, of 145 members, 18 were women.) It's possible, then, it was at the Bicycle Club that Alexander met his future wife—certainly, once they were married, he and Mrs A. Lindsay were prominent members of both the Argus and, later, the Lewisham Cycle Club. (And to prove it wasn't exclusively for young members, in 1900, when "Mrs Alex Lindsay" is elected captain of the lady's section of the club, Alexander's aunt Mildred Couchman is elected president.)

The woman Alexander married was Florence Lucy Peacock. Born in Bath in 1872, her mother died only three months later, so she would never have known her. Her father moved the family to Greenwich and became Hosier to

the Royal Navy, but died in 1892, after which she had been living with an aunt. She and Alexander married at St John's Baptist Church in Leytonstone.

With Alexander married and setting up home elsewhere (he and his new wife would soon be living at 6 Radford Road, Hither Green, about a mile and a half south of Blackheath Rise), Bessy, Margaret and David would have seen a reduction in their household income. Sometime in 1896, then, the decision was taken to leave 9 Blackheath Rise and move in with Bessy's widowed sister next door at number 7.[48] This would be David's home for around the next twenty years, and in a household consisting of his aunt, his mother, his sister and himself, as well as being the youngest, he was the only male.

The days of the three Bellamy sisters living in three consecutive houses were over. Marianne Joyce and her husband had already moved out of Blackheath Rise. Henry Edward Joyce continued to involve himself in local affairs—he was president of the Lewisham Swimming Club and a member of the Lewisham District Board of Works—but seems to have spent time in Folkestone as well as a variety of houses in the Lewisham area. His redoubtable energies, though, were starting to flag. He was one of the coffin-bearers at Theodore Couchman's funeral, but by the end of that year was forced to retire from *The Shipping Gazette* due to poor health. (The announcement made its way as far as *The Western Morning News*—a paper covering Devon, Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset—which said "His friends—and they are world-wide, especially among shipping folks—will regret to hear that increasing years and none too robust health conduce to this step."[49]) Following this, rather abruptly, in January 1896, he was declared bankrupt. His youngest daughter Margaret was married in April (David's sister being one of the bridesmaids), and in May the papers announced he was taking a six months' tour, "for the benefit of his health", after which he doesn't seem to have returned permanently to Lewisham. (He would die in 1907, in Bournemouth, after seemingly living in lodging houses for a while, separated from his wife. She, meanwhile, had moved in with their daughter Margaret and her husband in Southampton. Margaret died in 1905 and her husband remarried, but Marianne Joyce continued to live with the couple until her own death in 1910.)

But perhaps the days of such men as Henry Edward Joyce—who had established himself as both a newspaper editor and a local councillor—were

over. Lewisham was no longer the green and spacious town on the edge of Black Heath. It had grown to join in one continuous suburb of London with the surrounding villages of Hither Green, Rushey Green, Lee, Blackheath and Ladywell. In 1907, a tramline opened along Lewisham Road, running past the end of Blackheath Rise. The days of local vestrymen voting one another into a series of committees and councils had passed, to be replaced by the Borough Council. Increasingly, a man of Henry Edward Joyce's ambitions would have to dedicate himself to either politics or business, not both.

The end of this age came with the death of Queen Victoria. In 1897, the nation had celebrated her Diamond Jubilee. David's employers had special stands constructed so the staff, along with their wives and families, could watch the passing parade—a parade whose every many-titled participant was listed in the papers, taking up almost the entire front page of *The Daily News* for Monday 21 June. She died four years later. The Victorian Age passed into the Edwardian, and the nineteenth century into the twentieth.

But what of David himself? Pick notes that, while he didn't make friends with his co-workers at Price Forbes, he did have a pair of walking companions who shared his interest in philosophy and geology, two brothers by the name of Fitzhenry.[50] Based on the details Pick gives, it's possible to identify at least one very likely candidate: Woodfield Duncombe Tighe Fitz-Henry.[51] Born in Ashtead in Surrey in 1883, Woodfield was a clerk at a shipping agent's office in 1901—making it quite possible he worked near David, perhaps commuting on the same train—lodging at 64 Brookbank Road in Lewisham. (A few years earlier, Walter de la Mare lived on the same road, in the days before he found fame as a poet and short story writer.) As for brothers, he had many—Woodfield was a son of his father's second marriage, and in all had twelve siblings and step-siblings, nine of whom were male—but two can definitely be placed in Lewisham during David's lifetime. Both Rowley Steavens Wykeham Fitz-Henry (born 1880) and William Fitz-Henry (born 1885) were living at the All Saints Orphanage in 1891, and this was virtually next door to Colfe's School, which David was attending at the time. The Fitz-Henrys' father, William, a retired captain of the 60th Rifles in the army, died in 1885 (before William was born) and his second wife, Martha, died in 1889 (sadly, from alcohol poisoning). The one daughter of that generation was sent to live with a relative, but the boys went to an orphanage. Which of these two

might have been the other Fitz-Henry brother who shared walking expeditions with David? In 1901, Rowley was a medical student, living in St Pancras, London, so would have been close by; I can't find any record of William after the orphanage.

Woodfield Fitz-Henry emigrated to Canada in 1906. According to Pick, he continued to correspond with David but died young. In fact, he lived to middle age, dying at the age of forty eight in Myrtle, Manitoba (old enough, then, to have read David's first four novels). By this point, he'd married (to Mary Wright in 1913), had four children, and had recently become the Myrtle Postmaster.

Pick says both brothers emigrated to different parts of the world. I can't find out what happened to William, but Rowley completed his medical studies, became a doctor in 1906 and practiced in Llanelly in Wales, but died the following year. If these, then, are the Fitzhenry brothers David spent time with, the companionship came to an end midway through the first decade of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, where Alexander had discovered the joys of cycling, David found a different interest to pursue in his out-of-work hours: chess. For a while it even seems the two brothers' interests overlapped, for the Argus Bicycle Club formed a chess team (it played the Lewisham Chess Club, to which David belonged), and for a while Alexander acted as match secretary to the Lewisham Chess Club. But ultimately Alexander's interest either faded or—as related in the next chapter—he tried to better his income by a disastrous move to Birmingham, meaning he was no longer in Lewisham to play for either club.

Like cycling, chess became something of a phenomenon at the end of the nineteenth century, as organised professional and amateur tournaments began to be played in earnest throughout Britain. Area leagues and associations (the London Chess League was founded in 1886, the Kent Chess Association in 1889) brought together clubs for yearly championships, and newspapers such as David's local, *The Kentish Mercury*, had chess columns that presented problems for enthusiasts to solve, records of notable games, results of ongoing competitions, and so on.

David's interest in the game can be dated from at least November 1898, when the results of a match between the Lewisham Chess Club and the Argus

Bicycle Club were printed in the *Kentish Mercury*. In this match, both David and Alexander played (though not against each other); David won his game, Alexander lost his. The Lewisham Chess Club had been around since 1886 (one of its presidents being the Reverend W. Hook Longsdon—the "Hooky" from Colfe's who caned a boy for lighting the schoolroom fire), but it seems to have gone through at least one period of low, or even no, membership after this. David's involvement seems to have been part of a revived form of the club.

In March the following year, he submitted a chess game—"played by two amateurs"—to Samuel Tinsley's chess column in the *Kentish Mercury*, where it was printed with commentary from Tinsley ("this line of play cannot be commended").[52] (See "David Lindsay's Chess Game", p. 198.) For the following few years, David can be found taking part in inter-club matches as part of the Kent County Cup. This tournament was played in "seasons" beginning in the latter half of each year (groups for the first round would be announced in October), with the final matches being played at the Kent County Chess Association's Annual Congress around May or June the following year. David can be found participating in the 1898–1899 to the 1902–1903 seasons for Lewisham. In 1901, he's the club secretary, writing to the papers to give details of membership:

> LEWISHAM CHESS CLUB.—Mr D. Lindsay writes us to the coming season's arrangements:—We meet at 8p.m. on Wednesdays throughout the season at the Plough, near Lewisham station. The subscription is 5s., or 2s. 6d. for members residing two miles or more from headquarters. All applications should be made to the secretary, 7, Blackheath-rise, Lewisham. Entries for our winter handicap must be received not later than October 16th. The entrance fee is 5s., a proportion of which sum is repayable for each game won or drawn. We have again entered the Kent Cup contest, and hope to be as successful in this competition as hitherto.[53]

Results of the individual club matches were sometimes reported (often broken down by player) in local papers, but not always, so it's impossible to

tell for sure how good a player David was. But in the matches I have found, David seems to have won significantly more than he lost (though the club itself never made the cup finals) until both the club and David seemed to flag in the second half of 1903. At this point, they don't enter the Kent County Cup, but instead play in the "Junior-level" Lewis Cup, whose entrants were limited to a maximum total handicap per club. Even then, they don't do well.

Perhaps one reason for Lewisham's dip in chess prowess was that one of their key members, O. C. Muller, who had won the individual Kent Championship Cup in 1900, and played in the club's County Cup games from 1900 to 1903, moved to a different club. Perhaps, also, local interest was flagging—a match against Lee in 1903 sees four games lost by Lewisham because the scheduled players were absent.

David's involvement in the game seems to have been intense but ultimately short-lived. According to Sellin, he devoted himself to it so much that "it brought on a nervous breakdown",[54] and it's easy to see how, having found an outlet for his intellectual energies left unfulfilled by work, he might have poured too much of himself into it, to the point of overstrain. (Though, as revealed below, he was also writing at this time, and the work involved in that, plus its rejection from at least one publisher in 1902, doubtless added to the strain.) Kenneth Gunnell reports playing David towards the end of his life, and judged him to be "at best, no more than… a very average club player",[55] though that of course is well after the height of his interest in the game. The peak, for him, perhaps came when he attended the 1902 Kent County Chess Association Congress in Tunbridge Wells as one of the delegates[56] (there being one from each club). It would be intriguing to know if he also attended the previous year, for at the 1901 Congress prizes had been handed out by Kent resident and chess enthusiast Lord Dunsany, in the days before he became a noted fantasy author and playwright.

Recent research from Mark Valentine has revealed that David submitted two novels to the publishers Chatto and Windus in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1902 there was *Aletheus*, or *Altheus*, and in 1908 a novel called *The Confessions of an Egoist*, which seems to have been about a young man's progression from materialism to idealism. Both were rejected, though a reader's report for the latter noted at least that it showed "considerable intellectual vigour" was "very well written".[57] Neither manuscript survives.

There's one more significant event from David's life that occurred around this time: his engagement to a Scottish cousin. And there seems to be only one candidate for this, the daughter of James Lindsay Hilson and David's aunt Mary. Jessie Elizabeth Barbara Hilson was born on 14 March 1884, and so was eight years and a few days David's junior. The engagement was said to have lasted for fourteen years, being broken off by mutual consent just before the First World War. So, it would have started around 1900, and it's in July 1900 that the only record I can find of David's mother visiting Jedburgh occurs, when she's listed among the spectators at the Jedburgh Border Games, along with the Lindsay Hilsons and David's sister Margaret. It's possible, then, that this visit was to celebrate the engagement. Jessie—who would generally go by a shortening of her second name, Bessie, just like David's mother—would have been sixteen at the time, David twenty four.

Jessie was often noted in the newspapers in the following years as providing musical accompaniment at a variety of church-associated events, including the Sabbath School at which her mother had played a devoted role. She was for some time the organist at the Abbey United Free Church in Jedburgh, and was also the church's secretary for a while. It's easy to imagine that her musical ability might well have provided a bonding point with David, but also that her close association with the church might have added to his ultimate disincentive to go through with the marriage. We just can't know what relations between the two were like. She would die, unmarried, in 1940, of tuberculosis.

The early years of the twentieth century, then, saw David's engagement, his involvement with chess and the breakdown that followed it, his friendship with the Fitz-Henry brothers and its end. The next two major events to relate didn't happen to David himself, but his brother. One had an effect, it seems, of straining the relationship between the two; for the other we don't have David's opinion, though it would be fascinating to know. These are Alexander's bankruptcy, and his subsequent reinvention as a novelist.

4

Alexander

1901–1915

David's brother's bankruptcy was announced in October 1904. Appearing as it did in a number of national papers, including the *Daily News* in London and the *Edinburgh Gazette*, such a broadcasting of the family's woes might have caused a certain amount of awkwardness in a socially-conscious middle-class family of the time. But there were financial implications too. Mildred Couchman had acted as part-guarantor on a £150 overdraft Alexander had arranged for the company he had, at the time, sole financial responsibility for, and presumably she would have had to pay out when he couldn't—a heavy blow to a family where David's salary as a clerk was, presumably, the main income.

The full story begins in 1901. Alexander, by that time married for just over five years, was earning £160 a year (the equivalent of about £17,000 in 2024) in his job as an insurance clerk, and wanted to better himself. His plan was to become an insurance agent, and earn money through commissions rather than a fixed wage. He decided on Birmingham as the place to do this—the largest city in the north, at the time, and one buzzing with commercial and manufacturing activity. (He perhaps also knew it as the birthplace of his maternal grandfather, Thomas Bellamy.) By the middle of 1901, then, he was selling the lease on his home on Radford Road. (His cousin Edward Ernest Joyce can be found living there in 1911.)

Alexander's plans for a golden future received something of a knock towards the end of that year, though, as he was caught leaving a train without a valid ticket—he tried to pass off a two-week-old ticket as that day's—and ended up in court, being forced to pay a fine. At this point, he's described in the papers as still living on Radford Road, so evidently hadn't made the move

to Birmingham yet.

When he finally did, that golden future still eluded him. Far from improving on his £160-a-year salary, he found himself making only about £2 a week as an insurance agent. It was at this point he was made an offer that seemed it would change things, at least to someone in Alexander's perhaps desperate state of mind. He was approached by a Mr Watson, asking if he would register a company. Alarm bells should have rung immediately—why couldn't Mr Watson register it himself? why did he need a front?—but Alexander agreed, and Watson (Walsall) Ltd was launched with a capital of £4,000 in £1 shares. Alexander would be the promotor—selling the shares—as well as being the company secretary on a salary of £1 10s a week, along with the promise of shares. Apparently, he actually received nothing for his part in this company, but somehow managed to be persuaded to enter into other, similar-sounding deals with the same people. In January 1904, a failing furniture company called Fane and Miller was acquired—for next to nothing, as it was "in a hopeless condition", as Alexander later said in his bankruptcy hearing (leading the presiding Registrar to quip, "Was that the reason for turning into a company?", to much laughter[58]). It was to be turned into a limited company, with £1,000 in shares. Again, Alexander would be promotor and secretary. He also took sole financial responsibility for the business until it received its limited liability status. It was for Fane and Miller that Alexander arranged the £150 overdraft, with three guarantors: himself, his aunt Mildred Couchman, and a Birmingham accountant associated with the group of men who were behind this formation of companies.

But in March 1904, Watson (Walsall) Ltd failed and entered into receivership. Fane and Miller followed later the same year. Alexander had by this point taken out a £40 loan on his own furniture, and seems to have been forced to sell this in September. He got £40 18s for it, which the man he'd borrowed from deemed "insufficient to satisfy his claim including interest",[59] and so Alexander was tipped into bankruptcy. His assets amounted to £1 16s; his debts were £525.

When he appeared in court towards the end of the year, though, it became apparent Alexander hadn't just made some bad business decisions. He'd been caught up in something he didn't fully understand. It's evident, though, that the Registrar (acting as judge in the hearing) and Official Receiver (acting as

prosecutor) both knew there was more going on than Alexander's woes. There seems to have been a programme of creating limited liability companies, only to deliberately bankrupt them. The scam seems to have worked something like this: a failing company is acquired, and the scammers make that company a loan, supposedly to help it re-establish itself. The firm is then turned into a limited liability company. Shares are sold, and the income is used to buy assets. Then the scammers change the terms of their loan, making it impossible for the company to repay, thus forcing it into bankruptcy. At this point, the scammers, whose loan gives them the greatest interest in the company, step in and sell off all the assets. They get their loan amount back, plus interest, while the shareholders lose everything. And it was perfectly legal.

The fact the Registrar and Receiver knew what was going on comes out in their focusing, during Alexander's bankruptcy hearing, not so much on Alexander himself, as on the accountant who was associated with this company-forming group. His name was Sidney Fowler Wright, and he would later become known—with a slight name-change to "Sydney"—as a science fiction, mystery, and historical fiction author (starting with *The Amphibians* in 1924).[60] At this time, though, he was a man the Registrar and Receiver knew of as being associated with a suspicious number of failed companies. As it's reported in the *Birmingham Mail* (1 December 1904)[61]:

> Mr Dorsett [*Receiver*]: I put it to you that you have never floated anything but a bogus company?—[*Wright:*] It is an absolute lie.
>
> Mr. Dorsett: Can you mention one sound, successful company that you floated?—[*Wright:*] I don't float them, as a rule. I never floated a public company.
>
> [*Dorsett:*] You did the introducing, and let the bankrupt bluff the public?—[*Wright:*] Certainly not.

Eventually, the Registrar is forced to put an end to this line of questioning, because what should be Alexander Lindsay's bankruptcy hearing is at risk of turning "into a fight between two persons with whom that court was not concerned"[62]—one of these, clearly, being Sidney Fowler Wright.

But the hearing dragged on through several court appearances. Alexander was told to produce his accounts, including records of "the whole of his transactions to Mr Sidney Fowler Wright",[63] but by midway through January of the following year had not yet managed to do so. Instead, he seems to have written a letter to the Official Receiver, first of all claiming that his accounts were "at his fingers' ends" and asking for more time before the next hearing, but also apparently including some remarks to which the Receiver "took exception". Whatever these remarks were, the presiding Registrar said: "Yes, I think such things are better left unsaid, but, when once said, one can afford to pass them over."[64] Evidently, allowances were being made for the severe strain Alexander was under—and, perhaps, for the fact that he was clearly not the prime instigator of this mess. Alexander was reported as saying at his hearing that "in consequence of his connection with the two companies, he had lost everything."[65] Later, the prosecuting Registrar said to Alexander's representative: "Don't you see your client is only a pawn in the game?"[66]

The hearing concluded in April 1904. Alexander was declared bankrupt. But proceedings against Sidney Fowler Wright, which had been threatened in the earlier hearings, would not be taking place. Wright, it seems, was legally sound; Alexander had "lost everything".

What happened next to Alexander isn't clear. Unlike bankrupts in Charles Dickens' day, he would not have gone to jail, but he would have faced restrictions until fully discharged, including set repayments for his debts and being forbidden from starting any new business of his own. At his hearing, he said he was attempting to find work in Birmingham, but by the 1911 census he's back in Lewisham, living in what seem to be lodgings at 28 Cressingham Road. What's more, by this time, his wife is not with him. Quite when the separation occurred, it's impossible to tell, but in 1911 she's living at the Northern Fever Hospital in Southgate, on the other side of the city from her husband, working as a seamstress.

She's still there in the 1920s, though by this time she's a widow. (Both Pick and Sellin mention Alexander's having extra-marital affairs, though whether this was before or after the separation isn't clear. Sellin also mentions that Alexander spent some time abroad, possibly after his bankruptcy.[67])

But there's a further twist to Alexander's story before his untimely death. For, in 1911, David's brother became "Alexander Crawford", novelist.

Alexander was not the first of David's family to become a published author. Their Scottish uncle James Lindsay Hilson had retired from Jedburgh's declining wool trade by the start of the twentieth century and in 1906 moved to nearby Kelso, where he became the town's librarian. (He'd move back to Jedburgh in 1911 to become factor for the Marquis of Lothian.) He used his time as a librarian to write extensively on local history topics, publishing articles in local newspapers and journals including the *Jedburgh Gazette*, *Border Standard*, *Kelso Mail*, and the *Transactions of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club*, as well as *The Scotsman* under his initials "J. L. H." These were collected in a number of volumes, including such titles as *Yesterdays in a Royal Burgh* (1906), *Burns's Border Tour, and Other Newspaper Articles* (1907), *Yesterdays with the Freeholders of Roxburghshire* (1909), *Wool and its Manufacture: Early and General History: The Beginnings in Scotland* (1909), *More Yesterdays in a Royal Burgh* (1909), *Yesterdays in the Middle Marches* (1909), *Yesterdays with the Boys' Brigade* (1910), *Jedburgh Typography, 1817–1845* (1915) and *Berwick-upon-Tweed Typography, 1753–1900* (1919).

Alexander's output was of a somewhat wider appeal. He had, it seems, become by this time "a hard-living journalist, much entangled with women",[68] to quote Pick. And indeed, one of the aspects of his writing that was picked up in reviews was how "Mr. Crawford can be depended upon for a brisk, interesting picture of present-day city life"[69]—the pen-name "Mr. Crawford" doubtless derived from the fact that the most prominent Lindsay family in the country were the Earls of Crawford. (And, for a more detailed picture of what "present-day city life" meant, the *Devon and Exeter Daily* said Alexander's novel *The Alias* was "very modern in its details, telephones, automobiles, swagger flats, and veronal tablets, giving it a flavour of the rushing fashionable life of to-day in London society".[70])

Why did he write under a pseudonym? Although it's possible it was to separate himself from his past (one of his novels, *The Alias*, is about a bankrupt who continues to do business by changing his name), it's unlikely it was to hide his identity entirely, as most of his novels were announced in his old school's magazine, *The Colfeian*, along with his actual name and dates of school attendance:

> We are just able to record here the publication by Blackwood, of 'Kapak,' a new novel by Alexander Crawford (Lindsay) (1880–5). The scene is laid in the lands of the Incas, and Kapak is the great and long-expected deliverer. Of his coming and his going (the latter by airship) does the story tell and tell it well, and, of course, we shall all read it.[71]

He published, in all, four novels—*Kapak* (1911), *Monsieur Carnifex* (1912), *The Alias* (1913), and *Outside the Law* (1914)—the latter two also being serialised in *The Daily Mail*. In addition, there were two novel-length serials which might have made it to book form had he lived—*The Husband She Bought* (serialised in 1914), and *Just Like Other Men* (serialised in 1915)—and a number of short stories, including "The Experiment" which deals with a dog granted a human level of intelligence by a scientific procedure (published in *Short Stories*, December 1913[72]) and "A Scrap of Paper", which appeared in the same issue of *The Evening News* as Arthur Machen's notorious "The Bowmen" (29 September 1914).

Alexander's were popular novels, mixing adventure, intrigue and romance in a way that could appeal to a wide audience. *Kapak* was about the efforts of a prince of the South American republic of Torridor to raise his people (descendants of the Incas) back to prominence, and to revenge themselves upon the Spanish for their conquest centuries before. The hero, though—as always in Alexander's novels—is an Englishman. The story culminates in a giant aeroplane crashing into the crater of a volcano, and received comparisons in at least one review to Rider Haggard. *Monsieur Carnifex* is about the contested succession to the throne of the Balkan state of Phracia, one of whose claimants is backed by the Russians, the other by the Austrians. The key is who will marry Princess Elizabeth Petrovic—but she, of course, is in love with an Englishman, Geoffrey Wynn, who saved her from a sinking ship. (An incident that, if it was inspired by the sinking of the Titanic earlier the same year, shows how quickly Alexander was writing.) *The Alias*, meanwhile, is on home territory, and distinctly familiar in plot, as it deals with a businessman ("an experienced and gentlemanly swindler" as the *Daily Telegraph* put it, or "a Napoleon of finance" in *The Scotsman*[73]), recently out of jail for bankruptcy, who immediately sets up a new business using a new

name, and sets about loaning money to failing firms, turning them into public liability companies, then calling in the loan and forcing them into bankruptcy, whereby he can claim the lion's share of the pickings. Evidently informed by Alexander's own experiences in Birmingham—one of the main characters is a wily accountant, fulfilling the real-life role of Sidney Fowler Wright—the hero is a wrongfully-disgraced gentleman, Neil Wishart, who gets duped into being the businessman's secretary, and is surely a highly romanticised picture of Alexander himself. *Outside the Law* swaps business for politics, with the story of a rising star in Parliament who thinks his shy wife may be holding him back, and starts to be drawn in by a scheming widow, Biddy Brangwyn, who'd much more fit his material ambitions. The hero, meanwhile, is an earlier suitor for that shy wife, dismissed at the time for his lack of money, who has since gone abroad and made his fortune.

From these summaries alone, it's evident Alexander Crawford's output was very worldly—dealing with international affairs, politics, business, "the latest discoveries in applied science and the intriguings of international finance" (as *The Scotsman* put it[74])—as well as being lively in terms of action and plot, with a strong romance element. His fiction was almost universally praised in the reviews I've been able to find—and these are many, for Alexander's were the sort the public wanted to read, and so the sort that reviewers found it easy (as they didn't with David's) to review: "Mr Crawford entertains the reader from first to last, and proves himself an excellent writer of adventure", "The story grips at the very first page, and the interest of the reader is strongly held to the conclusion", "Mr Crawford has a considerable gift for description… He is also the possessor of a fertile imagination".[75] Here is *The Bookseller* (25 December 1912), on *Monsieur Carnifex*:

> The different scenes and incidents and the various characters of the tale are all handled with consummate skill, and throughout Mr Crawford maintains his tale on a high level of excellence, which places it in a place by itself, quite outside the ordinary novel of the season. As a romance the story is a complete success, and as a piece of powerful writing it bears on every page the unmistakable hallmark of real distinction.

Whereas *The Scotsman* (23 March 1914), reviewing *Outside the Law*, said "a high place may be claimed for Mr Crawford among the best fiction writers of the day."

It is, though, in the occasional criticisms that indications of Alexander's strengths as a novelist come out: "The author's skill prevents the somewhat complicated plot from becoming obscure", "what little comedy there is prompts a suspicion that Mr. Crawford has not yet found his true métier".[76] *The Alias* is "an old-fashioned story depending for its interest on a strong plot and melodramatic situations", though for all this remains "a thoroughly readable and exciting story".[77] The one constant point of praise is that "Mr Crawford draws his characters with a rare skill" (*The Times*), "The author draws all his men and women with skill" (*The Birmingham Daily Post*), and "Mr Crawford has a pronounced flair for endowing each of his characters with an intense and distinct personality" (*The Birmingham Daily Post* again, but in a different review).[78]

And this, from *The Scotsman*: "Mr. Crawford makes little attempt to give us people who are merely pleasing."[79] It's notable that each of his novels, though having a heroic and worthy Englishman as its protagonist, centres around an ambitious and morally ambiguous figure (Prince Kapak, Paul Carnifex, Edward Charles Bevington from *The Alias*, and the Socialist MP Lisle Torrance from *Outside the Law*) who is often paired with an outright immoral character drawing them further into dark plots (Sebag in *Kapak*, Hilda Tregarth in *The Alias*, Mrs Brangwyn in *Outside the Law*). It's these morally complex characters who are the more interesting and convincing in his novels, though it must be said, this is often the case in *any* fiction where the hero and heroine have to emerge entirely blameless at the end.

David must surely have read his brother's work, and it would be fascinating to know what he thought about the novels themselves, and what their publication made him feel about his own lack of success—did he feel jealous and frustrated, or spurred on? We don't know if he was still writing and submitting after those initial two novels of his were rejected, but it's around this time, according to Pick, that he began saving up the ideas that would become *A Voyage to Arcturus*.

How much of a financial success Alexander made from his writing is difficult to tell. In the 1911 census he's living alone in a two-room apartment,

but that is at the start of his fiction-writing career; yet, on his death, he can't have left much to his wife, as she's still living and working at the Fever Hospital in the 1920s. And the next public record relating to Alexander, sadly, is of his death. This is from the *Daily Mirror* (9 September 1915, p. 10):

> *Novelist's Untimely Death.*
>
> The death of the novelist, Alexander Crawford, at the early age of forty-six, is one of those instances not rare in literary life of a man dying when just coming into his own. His first success was with "Monsieur Carnifex", a book upon which there would have been a second run as the public became better acquainted with his name. *Daily Mirror* readers will remember those excellent stories "The Husband She Bought" and "Just Like Other Men" from his pen.
>
> *A Charming Personality.*
>
> Crawford was a man of level temperament and charming personality, and he had a turn of wit which he showed sometimes in the humorous short stories he contributed to the magazines. He was fond of travel, and especially the sea. Though he had always cherished literary aspirations, he did not turn seriously to literary work till five years ago. All this work was marked by the sincerity, strength and sympathy of the man himself.

He died on 4 September 1915, at the house on Blackheath Rise where David lived with his aunt, mother, and sister. The cause was "anaemia chronic splenic 3 years" and "asthenia". The second cause—asthenia is chronic tiredness—was doubtlessly a result of the first. Splenic anaemia was an incurable condition at the time. The main symptoms were an enlargement of the spleen, anaemia, and a compromised immune system, with, in the later stages, jaundice (a reduced production of haemoglobin also resulted in a greenish tint to the skin), and cirrhosis of the liver. The fact, though, that he

had been suffering from the condition for three years adds a sad undertone to Alexander's success as a writer. Presumably, he had been labouring under ill-health—and perhaps even a knowledge that this was a fatal condition—since the publication of his second novel.

Both Pick and Sellin note that David and Alexander were not particularly close. Sellin notes that Alexander's affairs with women, plus the failure of his marriage, did not go down well with the family.[80] "Some of his adventures," Pick writes, "had repercussions on the family that deeply disturbed David"—which could refer to Mildred Couchman (and therefore David's household) being financially affected by Alexander's bankruptcy. But, at the end, Alexander came home in his final illness, and David was noted on the death certificate as being present at his brother's death.

Alexander's ashes were interred alongside his uncle Theodore Couchman in Ladywell Cemetery, where his name was given as Alexander "Crawford" Lindsay.[81] His epitaph was a quote from Shelley on the death of Keats:

> He is not dead, he doth not sleep, he hath awakened from the dream of life.

5

War and Marriage

1915–1918

A few weeks before his brother's death, David was woken by an alarming sound: "a tremendous crash, as though a chimney-stack had crashed through the roof overhead." His aunt Mildred, whose bedroom was directly above, came rushing downstairs in alarm, but nobody else in the house had heard anything, and no damage was found. David related this experience in a letter to his friend E. H. Visiak several years later, in response to the former's account of supernatural "knocks" he'd heard. David believed the sound he and his aunt heard was of a similar unearthly nature. "We are surrounded," he wrote to Visiak, "by a terribly queer unseen universe."[82]

The experience made its way into his first published novel:

> Before any words were spoken, a loud and terrible crash of falling masonry caused the assembled party to start up from their chairs in consternation. It sounded as if the entire upper part of the building had collapsed. Faull sprang to the door, and called to the servant to say what was happening. The man had to be questioned twice before he gathered what was required of him. He said he had heard nothing. In obedience to his master's order, he went upstairs. Nothing, however, was amiss there, neither had the maids heard anything.[83]

The same event could also be said to open his novel *Devil's Tor*, in the bolt from the sky that shatters the stone "devil's head" atop the tor. And, if one were to give it the supernatural import Lindsay ascribed to it, that crash-from-above could even have been realised in the bomb that fell near his house in Hove during the Second World War.

Whatever its explanation, there was evidently tension in the air at this time, whether psychic, psychological, or political. David's brother was dying, David himself may have suffered a bout of illness (of the hereditary liver ailment, mentioned above on p. 17, which Sellin says occurred before this[84]), and the world had been embroiled in one great conflict since the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife the previous June. And the changes in David's life that would follow his brother's death and his own conscription into the army surely prove that a frustration with his status as an unmarried city clerk with no means of expressing his deeper ideas was building towards something—a change that would break up the home life he'd known for the last twenty years or so.

When Britain declared itself at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary, the nation's armed forces opened themselves up to voluntary enlistment. As the conflict continued, though, it became obvious this vast military machine was going to need many more men than those prepared to volunteer. In August 1915, a month before Alexander's death, a National Register was created so the government could assess who could be called up, and who could replace them in the jobs they left vacant. All men and women between the ages of fifteen and sixty five were entered into the register, along with their dependencies (wives and children), and skills. David assumed that, at thirty nine years of age, he was too old to be called up. But at the start of 1916, the Military Service Act, known colloquially as the Batchelor's Bill, conscripted all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty one. A few months later, this was extended to married men as well.

David's war records show that he was "deemed to have been enlisted" for General Service on 2 March 1916, the day before his fortieth birthday.[85] A medical examination followed on 7 March, in which he was recorded as being an "Insurance Broker's Clerk (Lloyds)", 5 feet 8½ inches tall, weighing 140lbs. (The average height of a recruit was 5 feet 5½ inches, so David was tall for his day.) He's recorded as having a good physical development, with three vaccination marks on his left arm, an upper denture, and a slight varicose vein in his right leg.

This didn't mean he was instantly a soldier. After this initial enlistment, David was likely sent home and allowed to continue his former work until required. It wasn't until late September or early October of the same year that

he was called into the Central London Recruiting Depot for a further assessment. This meant another medical examination, which involved such undignified performances as being told to strip completely and hop across a specified span, first on one leg, then the other. David was declared fit for service and placed in the Grenadier Guards, a division of the army's Foot Guards. (Pick mentions that David went against his family's wishes in not opting for the Scots Guards,[86] while Sellin says he was assigned to the Scots Guards but refused.[87] Both, particularly the latter, seem unlikely. David probably had no choice, and it's unlikely his own preferences would have been listened to amidst the mass mobilisation of new recruits. Volunteers at the start of the war had been able to request a posting; conscripts at this stage had to take what they were given.)

David was sent to the Grenadier Guards' depot in Caterham, 15 miles south of Lewisham. Built in 1877, this had been the largest army depot of the Victorian Age, its design informed by efforts to improve the sanitation of military buildings following the Crimean War. Coulsdon Common was to the north of it, and to the south was the Metropolitan District Asylum For Imbeciles, later known as Caterham Mental Hospital. (Neither the depot nor the hospital is still standing.)

As with all other recruits, one of the first things to happen to David was that he would have been given a tetanus shot. On 9 November, the TAB vaccination (typhoid, plus paratyphoid A and B) followed, with a further dose on 23 November. On 18 November, his appointment to the Grenadier Guards was approved (by R. H. Cavendish, Captain for the Colonel of the Grenadier Guards), so presumably at this point he had passed some initial training and demonstrated his competence.

All enlisted soldiers began their time in the army with the same six weeks of basic training, after which they would receive further instruction specific to their branch of the armed services, to a total of about five or six months. Basic training included "physical jerks" and other fitness exercises, route marches, fatigues (a term covering dull work, such as digging ditches or peeling potatoes), as well as weapons training in the use of bayonets, firing a rifle, throwing a grenade and so on. The point was to turn a civilian into a man who would kill, or open himself up to the possibility of *being* killed, on command and without question. To David, as recorded in his "Sketch

Notes", the result was that "every soldier acquires more or less *insanity*; the result of his moral training".[88] Perhaps he was looking at the neighbouring mental hospital and wondering what the difference between it and the depot really was.

But there was something else going on in his life, parallel to his training as a soldier: on 21 December 1916, David married Jacqueline Silver, in the small village of Godstone, only 3 miles south of the Grenadier Guards' Depot.

David had met Jacqueline at a literary club, and was impressed by her ability to "speak with great gusto, and hold her own with men".[89] She was brown-haired with either grey or brown eyes, and around five and a half feet tall—over the average for a woman at the time.[90] The literary clubs of the day, unlike modern book clubs, were not necessarily limited to discussions of literature. They could have speakers and discussions on any subject, including history, health, politics, and so on. It's evident, though, that David and Jacqueline shared an interest in literature, because the plan they formed together was that David should fulfil his dream of becoming a writer. Other than that, it seems more a case of opposites attracting, with Jacqueline "lively, enthusiastic",[91] "sentimental and unreserved",[92] in contrast to Lindsay the "intensely-serious, puritanical Scot",[93] as Sellin characterises him.

Was David, though, "puritanical"? It seems more accurate to say he was instilled with the profound reserve of a Victorian upbringing. One of his "Sketch Notes" is particularly revealing on this:

> In times of great emotional disturbance, the first essential is concealment of the emotion, whether it be anger, remorse, love or fear. The natural desire to somehow express the feelings, and to relieve oneself by action, if acted upon, is certain to be afterwards regretted. The only wise course is to endure and wait.[94]

Underneath, though, he may well have been longing for an escape from this reserve—an escape Jacqueline offered and, perhaps, his church-organ-playing Scottish cousin didn't. (It's tempting to think of the contrast between

the pious Joiwind and the earthy, passionate Oceaxe in *Arcturus*, here.) His writing, particularly *A Voyage to Arcturus*, shows a deep familiarity with the sort of feelings no puritan would acknowledge: Maskull's murderous rages, Haunte's desperate sexual hunger, Gleameil's tortured longing for the wild music of Swaylone's Island. In his fiction, David doesn't disapprove of these feelings, as a puritan would, but admits them as being part of the human condition—a part that is played upon by Crystalman's deceit, yes, but is ultimately rooted in our true home of Muspel, whose fiery essence, when experienced in the raw, is "not light, but passion".[95]

This is one of the keys to both David's character and his writings. Outwardly, and on the surface of his writings, he avoided emotion. As he wrote to his friend E. H. Visiak, "The truth is, I have such a natural horror of the sentimental school [of literature], to which the world is at present given over, that I prefer ignorance to infection, and this winter, for example, have read little but Roman history."[96] (A passage that could easily have been written by another emotionally-reserved writer of weird fiction, H. P. Lovecraft, with its disparagement of feeling as mere sentimentality, and the fear of its "infection".) But the ultimate aim of his characters' various quests is a realm of the most elevated and intense of feelings: the passion of Muspel, the "music of spring" in *The Haunted Woman*, the intense feelings released by the archaic fruit in *The Violet Apple*. It was as though he had, through force of his imposed reserve, devised an elevated, even mystical place for emotion in his world, when experienced in its most sublime, even visionary form, as *passion*. (He himself found it in music, especially Beethoven.) His friend Robert Barnes described him as "a quiet, simple, inward man… somewhat alone in his special mind", but one whose "senses… were acute, and he took the keenest delight in every experience with which they enriched him".[97] This, then, was not a puritan, but a deeply sensitive man straightjacketed by an upbringing that had left him both drawn towards yet uneasy with emotion. No doubt part of him was attracted to Jacqueline's freer expression of her feelings—but, sadly, a lifetime of living in the hard Victorian shell of emotional reserve was not to be cast off easily, if, ultimately, at all.

Jacqueline was less than half David's age, eighteen years to his forty. David and his cousin Jessie had, at some point, ended their longstanding engagement, apparently by mutual consent; Jacqueline was still in the

aftermath of losing her fiancé (a friend of one of her brothers), who'd been killed in the war. According to Sellin, the couple's marriage followed "only a few months after their first meeting",[98] but that first meeting must surely have occurred at least a few months before David was sent to Caterham, otherwise it's hard to see how any intimacy between the two could have developed. It's evident, though, that there was an impulsive element in their decision to marry.

According to Pick, both families were against the marriage[99]—both families presumably meaning, in this case, both mothers, for David and Jacqueline had long been without fathers, and by this point all of Jacqueline's brothers had emigrated to the US. (The last one to go, her younger brother Bernard—only fifteen at the time—had left in July 1916, which may have been another factor in the boiling pot of emotions leading to Jacqueline's acceptance of David's proposal.) Supposedly, though, David and Jacqueline's "respective grandparents knew one another quite well"[100]—a remark in Sellin's biography of David that heightens a puzzle about Jacqueline Silver, one that emerges when tracing the details of her life in the available historical records, for it's hard to tell how their respective grandparents could possibly have known one another at all.

For instance, the idea, related by Sellin, that her mother was "French in origin".[101] When Jacqueline went to the United States in 1924 (to present her second daughter, the two-year-old Helen, to her mother, now living in New York) she stated on entry at Ellis Island that the person she was visiting was Mrs Yvonne Silver, who certainly sounds French. But this was not her mother's name. In all records associated with Jacqueline's brothers, and in the 1911 UK census where Jacqueline herself is living at 23 Princelet Street in Spitalfields (the address she gives on her marriage certificate), her mother is Yetta or Yetty Silverman, a midwife from Romania. And Jacqueline in this 1911 census is Jacqueline Silverman. Also in the 1911 census, Jacqueline and her brothers give their birthplace as Shadwell in London; but when her brothers travel to the United States, and when they enter into the process of becoming naturalised US citizens, they give a different birthplace: Rosh Pina in Palestine. Which raises the question, if Jacqueline's older brothers and her younger brother were born in Palestine, might she not have been born there, too? It's quite possible "Shadwell, London" was given in the 1911 UK census

as a birthplace to avoid being designated an alien and potentially deported. When the brothers entered the US, they no longer needed to do this (and, what's more, sticking to London as a birthplace might have meant being returned to England to serve in the army, as the First World War was now raging). Jacqueline may have used the surname Silver, rather than Silverman, to escape its Germanic connotations during the tensions of the First World War; or, equally, to avoid antisemitism. But it still raises the question of why she persisted in saying her mother was French into the 1920s. A lingering insecurity, perhaps, in a world capable of sudden and dangerous changes? Because, it turns out, Jacqueline's family had been through serious difficulties, including the death of her father, poverty, and a move from one far country to another. The notion that her and David's grandparents knew one another seems unlikely, considering that David's grandparents (all dead, by the time of his birth) hadn't moved much beyond Scotland on the one hand and Warwickshire on the other, whereas Jacqueline's had, presumably, been where her parents were born: in Russia, and Romania.

What, then, can be known about Jacqueline's family background and early life? Her mother was born Yetta Weschler in Botoşani in northern Moldavia, Romania, close to the border of modern-day Moldova and Ukraine (but when Yetta was born, close to the borders with Bukovina in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Bessarabia in the Russian Empire). Exactly when she was born is hard to say, as virtually every record I've found gives a different year of birth, from 1864 to 1872. (The most specific, though, is 15 July 1866, given on her Declaration to Naturalise as a US Citizen.) At some point she married a Russian man, whose name is almost as difficult to pin down as her birthdate: it might be Benetictus, Benadict, Baruch, or Bernard—all names given when his sons and daughter marry, and perhaps all attempts to render his Yiddish name.

Yetta and Benadict were Jews at a time of heightened antisemitism in their native countries: Tsar Alexander III, taking the Russian throne in March 1881, used the assassination of his predecessor to foment antisemitic riots throughout the country, and introduced persecutory legislation such as the May Laws, creating mass homelessness among Russia's poorest Jewish people; meanwhile, 1879 saw anti-Jewish riots in Yetta's home city of Botoşani.

The solution, for a small group of Romanians and Russians, was to found a

new home elsewhere. One attempt had already been made in the small Jewish community of Gei Oni in Ottoman Palestine, which was founded in 1878, but this had thinned down to a mere three families by 1882. At this point, its land was acquired by a new group of families and it was renamed Rosh Pina, which means "the head of the corner" or "cornerstone", as in the verse from Psalm 118: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." Rosh Pina, then, was to become the cornerstone of a new Jewish community, hopefully free of the political persecution in the Eastern Europe that had rejected them.

But there were tough times ahead. Multiple attempts at farming in Rosh Pina failed, and the community was in serious danger of starvation and poverty until it was rescued by the Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who offered to buy up the land and pay residents a monthly stipend. Even then, things didn't go smoothly. Rothschild installed his administrators in the settlement, to manage his affairs both at Rosh Pina and the wider region. There seems to have been some tension between the residents and the Baron's agents—all of whom were French Jews who seemed to have looked down somewhat on the Eastern Europeans of Rosh Pina. (But it's interesting to note their presence, which could be how Jacqueline got her French-sounding name.) But the arrangement evidently worked well enough for the settlement to turn around its former bad fortune.

Benadict and Yetta had eight children, born in either Rosh Pina or the nearby city of Safed. Six survived into adulthood, these being Charles (born 1888), David Leopold (born 1892), Solomon (born 1893), Jacqueline (born 1898), Bernard (born 1899 or 1900), and one other I've not been able to identify. When the youngest of these entered school in England, their father is described as having been a travelling salesman, but generally he's described as being of "independent means". These means, though, were evidently limited, and his death seems to have been exacerbated by financial worries. Perhaps he was forced to become a travelling salesman towards the end of his life.

It seems most likely his death occurred around 1900 or 1901. (There's a record of Yetta and her 11-month-old child Belnolte—presumably Bernard—being admitted to a poorhouse in Stepney for a single night in October 1901 which is perhaps an indicator of when his death occurred, or at least the

difficulties the family were in around that time.) Jacqueline, then, would have been young when her father died—a continuation of the theme of missing or dead fathers that pervades David's family story.

The Silverman family lived, at this time, in the London district of Stepney, just north of the Thames. This included the East End dock-side area of Shadwell, which was home to a large, often poor, immigrant populace. It's likely, then, that this is where they arrived in the country, and where a supportive Jewish community could be found. The children were sent to school. David, Solomon, and Jacqueline seem to have spent time at the Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum which, despite its name, also functioned as a boarding school, with a particular focus on preparing pupils for a useful trade. Places were few, though, and the Silverman children seem to have spent most of their time in other schools. Jacqueline had initially gone to Teesdale Street School in Bethnal Green, before being admitted to Betts Street School in St-George-in-the-East in January 1907. Betts Street School, whose pupils were predominately Jewish, had opened in 1884. Yetta, around the same time, passed the Central Midwives Board examinations and had herself placed on the UK Midwives' Roll. The family, who seemed to have been moving around a fair amount in the first decade of the twentieth century—addresses include 58 Blythe Street, 286 Cable Street, 11 Gateshead Place, and 111 Whitechapel Road, all in the same area of London—finally settled at 23 Princelet Street, and by the time of the 1911 census were doing well enough for the family to afford a domestic servant.

Nevertheless, the decision was made to move to America. Perhaps the family had relatives there, or felt there would be greater opportunities. It's also possible the start of the First World War, and the fact that all but one of Yetta's mostly grown-up children were males of an age likely to be called up, might have influenced the decision. Charles, already working as a waiter on passenger ships, made the move in 1913; David Leopold followed in 1914; Bernard, still in school at the time, went in 1916. (I can't find any mention of Solomon either moving to the US or remaining in the UK. As an electrical engineer of call-up age, it's quite possible he was brought into the war and perhaps died in service.)

Whether Yetta's plans were changed by her daughter's abrupt decision to marry or not, she remained in England until 1919, then crossed the Atlantic

on a ship where her eldest son Charles was serving as a waiter. She moved in with her son David Leopold in New York, and remained there until her death in 1927.

David and Jacqueline were married in the Register Office (so, not in church) for the District of Godstone. (The printed wording on the marriage certificate is "*in* the District of", but this has been crossed out and replaced with "*for* the District of". Godstone, a small village, had its council offices in the nearby town of Oxted, which raises the question of why David and Jacqueline didn't simply get married in Oxted.)

The witnesses to the marriage don't appear to be friends or relations, but local people enlisted for the purpose. The first was James Henry Clifford Brill, a solicitor's clerk who was probably working in Oxted at the time (as he did after the war). The second, F. M. Broom, is more of a mystery. A Florence M. E. Broom can be found living in the area in 1911 and 1939—but, at both times, she's an inmate at the Metropolitan Asylum in Caterham, the institution next door to David's army barracks.

Evidently, the couple managed something of a honeymoon, though the army didn't give conscripts time off for this. The fact that David would set his later novel *The Violet Apple* in Brasted, a village only nine miles east of Godstone, raises the possibility they might have spent time there, or at least visited it—but equally, David could have got to know the area himself during solitary cross-country tramps in his time off from square-bashing. But *The Violet Apple*, which is about two engaged couples—and whose protagonist Anthony gives up a family-approved engagement for marriage to a livelier though disapproved-of woman—has a conjugal air which certainly implies associations in David's imagination with his own marriage.

The honeymoon seems to have not gone entirely well. David, Pick writes, was "Deeply fascinated by women, who in turn found him warm and attractive" but "he was repelled by overt sexuality".[102] ("Sexual passion," David says in one of his "Sketch Notes", "is not a rose-bower, but a torture chamber."[103]) Faced with such raw emotion in the young woman who was now his wife, a lifetime of emotional reserve failed to crack. Pick writes of David seeming to reject Jacqueline's "passionate advances", then retreating

into apparent indifference at her subsequent anger. "Their honeymoon wounded them both," he writes, "making David hard and Jacky bitter."[104] How much of their marriage was like this is impossible to tell—the couple, after all, remained together, and had two children—but there were evidently difficulties from the start. The attraction of opposites came with an unhealthy dose of friction.

After the wedding, David remained posted at the barracks. Jacqueline moved at first to 22 Courtfield Gardens in Earls Court. Before the war, this had been a live-in school for foreign students, but presumably now was simply lodgings. The couple wouldn't have a home together until David's army career proper began at the end of his basic training. He was, it turns out, not to be sent abroad to fight, but would continue doing what he'd done as a civilian: working as a clerk. He was assigned to the Army Pay Corps, working at the administration offices on Birdcage Walk, close to Buckingham Palace. His age, as well as his skills, were doubtless a factor in this posting. Towards the end of 1917, the army's Travelling Medical Board reclassified his health from Class A (fit for service) to Class B2, which qualified him for "Labour Service Abroad" (so, presumably not fighting), with capacity "to walk five miles to and from work" and "see and hear sufficiently for ordinary purposes." (By comparison, Class B1 was "Able to march five miles, and see to shoot with glasses and hear well".) This leads to the question of whether David's health had deteriorated during his time in the army. The health checks for initial conscripts, though, were notoriously lax, and all too keen to hand out Class A's, so it's likely the B2 designation was simply a more honest evaluation of David's health. In June the following year, though, he would be reclassified once again as B3, "Only suitable for sedentary work". The likelihood is his initial basic training might have kept the now middle-aged David's physical health up, but once he was assigned a clerk's role, yet was still bound to the army during wartime, he might well have had less time for the sort of walking he'd enjoyed as a younger man.

But being a clerk in the Army Pay Corps didn't require David to live in barracks, so he and Jacqueline were able to make a home together. The couple moved into 8 Park Drive, just a few minutes' walk from Golders Green Underground Station. Later adverts for the property make it sound impressive for a man on an APC clerk's salary (1s 8d a day): a semi-detached

house with five bedrooms, a bathroom, two reception rooms, a lounge hall, kitchen and scullery, described as being of "artistic elevation with double bay windows", with "pretty gardens front and rear".[105] It sounds more like the sort of house that might have been shared, but David is the only person there on the Electoral Roll of 1918 (his wife not at the time having the vote).

The couple soon moved a little further north, to a house on the Finchley Road. Of a slightly more sensible size, this was a detached double-fronted residence on two floors, with four bedrooms, bathroom, domestic offices, and front and rear gardens. It was named Ruberslaw—presumably by David, as Rubers Law is a prominent hill near Jedburgh. (Interestingly, next door but one was a house called Croyland—a name David would appropriate as the surname of the main female character in *The Violet Apple*.)

Living in Golders Green put the couple only two miles northwest of Hampstead, the location of Montague Faull's house in the opening chapter of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, and a district David would presumably pass through each morning as he headed towards his army work in the city.

In January 1918, David was appointed Unpaid Lance Corporal, the next rank above Private, and the standard rank for specialist positions in the army, such as drivers, signallers and clerks. Later in the year he was elevated further to Corporal, though again it was an unpaid promotion—he would still only have been receiving standard Army Pay Corps private's rates.

At some point, he was transferred from the general Army Pay Corps to the Pay Office of the Machine Gun Corps, a more specialist division of the army whose pay offices were located inside the Imperial College of Engineering on Prince Consort Road (now part of Imperial College London). The Royal College of Music was on the same road which, if it was still in operation during the war, might have afforded David some pleasure as he made his way to and from work each day. On the other hand, the building where he worked also housed the Soldiers' Effects Department, through which relatives could claim deceased soldiers' belongings, something that would surely have served as a constant reminder of the many lives being claimed by this extended worldwide conflict.

Barely a month after David's elevation to Unpaid Corporal, though, that conflict came to an end, on 11 November 1918. David wasn't released from the army until 25 February the following year (even then, he was officially

transferred to "Class Z", meaning "Army Reserve on Demobilisation"—i.e., ready to be called up should the peace not last).

It was at this point David and Jacqueline were free at last to create the life they'd planned when they married. David was to leave Price Forbes—even though they offered him the role of office manager to induce him to stay—and make his living as a writer. Price Forbes gave him a lump sum, and he had money from a legacy he'd invested, to keep them going in the meantime. (It would be interesting to know where this legacy came from. David's uncle Theodore Couchman left everything to his wife when he died. David's Scottish aunt Mary Lindsay Hilson had died in January 1918, but, again, left everything she had to her husband. It's possible David might have got something from his older aunt, Anne, who died in 1904, back when it seemed he was to marry his Scottish cousin, which might well have made him a favourite in her will.)

And so, the couple left Ruberslaw and embarked on what Sellin describes as a nearly year-long quest[106] (though it must have begun after David's demobilisation at the end of February, and ended before the birth of the couple's first daughter at the start of October—a period of seven months) to find a place to live—and, for David, to write.

6

Cornwall and A Voyage to Arcturus

1919–1920

Sphinx, David's 1923 novel, opens with its protagonist Nicholas Cabot arriving in an out-of-the-way community to pursue his life's work of creating a machine to record dreams, something he has recently been enabled to do (having previously worked as an estate agent's clerk) thanks to a sizeable bequest from a rich relative. David himself must have felt a similar sense of freedom to pursue his own life's work—to also, in a way, record dreams—with the end of the Great War and his decision to quit Price Forbes.

He and Jacqueline left their house on the Finchley Road and began the search for a place to live and write. Sellin lists Lyme Regis, Torquay, Plymouth and Falmouth as places they explored, tracing the south coast of England westwards from Dorset to Cornwall. They finally came to a stop in Porth, a hamlet just north of the popular "seaside and golfing resort" (as it's described in a tourist guide of the time) of Newquay. More strictly part of the village of St Columb Minor—its full name, St Columb Porth, meaning "the port of St Columb"—it was originally used as a site for shipbuilding and unloading consignments of coal from Wales. The remains of an Iron Age fort had been found there. The beach itself was sand, with cave systems and rock pools dotted along the craggy coast.

(This pattern, of living in a smaller, quieter community just clockwise along the coast from a lively seaside resort, would continue throughout David and Jacqueline's subsequent moves, Ferring being adjacent to Worthing, and Hove being adjacent to Brighton. It's as though David, though repelled by the tawdriness of a tourist haven, could not entirely cut himself off from the bustle of modern life and live in, say, the remote village of Belhill, as depicted in *Devil's Tor*. Unless, of course, the tension was not within David, but

between him and the more outgoing Jacqueline—or simply one of practicality.)

Lindsay used his savings and pension to buy a semi-detached house called Seaforth, only steps away from the beach. He renamed the house Lynscott. (A 2004 article in the *Newquay Voice* suggests this combined David's surname with a reference to his Scottish roots, but it's far more likely a contraction of "Lindsay Cottage", which is what the very common house-name suffix "cott" or "cot" usually means. There had already been, anyway, a house in nearby Porthveor called Lynscott. But loading a portmanteau name with multiple meanings was, as *A Voyage to Arcturus* would prove, not something David was a stranger to.)

The couple settled down to a life that, in the light of their later financial troubles, seems extravagant. According to Pick, Jacqueline and David "lived as if the money would last forever, with a large house, servants and a carriage... There were picnics, rides, bathing parties, and friends came down for the summer. They called on the local gentry and entertained in their turn."[107] There were return visits to London, including its theatres. David applied himself to the garden, and on one occasion the postman made a point of thanking him for the beautiful scent of his roses, which made David blush.

On 2 October 1919, Jacqueline gave birth to a daughter, Diana Jacqueline Lindsay. (Both of Lindsay's daughters would have first names from Greek myth—Helen being born in 1922. But whether he knew it or not, David was using names already in the family. There had been both a Helen and a Diana Lindsay among his paternal grandfather's sisters, back in Newdosk in Scotland.)

By this point, David was at work on what would be his first published novel. *Nightspore in Tormance*, as he came to title it, was begun in April 1919 and finished in March 1920. He had, apparently, been working on the ideas that would go into this book since around 1910 (close enough after the rejection of *Confessions of an Egoist* that *Tormance* could well have been his next intended novel after that). Sellin, though, comments that "The novel was the fruit of twenty years of waiting",[108] which captures something of the book's air of pent-up wild imagination and profusion of ideas.

He submitted the final manuscript—of about 110,000 words—to Methuen & Co. in London. Founded in 1889 by a tutor who wanted to

publish his own textbooks (Algernon Methuen Marshall Stedman, who was still alive when the firm published *Arcturus*) their entry in the 1922 *Literary Year Book* said they accepted "All classes of literature, especially novels. Cheap literature and novels."[109] They had published Kipling, Wells, Henry James, Conrad, Wilde, Arnold Bennett, and D. H. Lawrence—and had seen one thousand and eleven copies of Lawrence's *The Rainbow* burned by the hangman outside the Royal Exchange, for being "a mass of obscenity of thought, idea and action throughout";[110] but they had also published Arthur Conan Doyle, Marie Corelli, and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Which of these did David think chimed most with his novel, to make Methuen his first choice to publish *Nightspore in Tormance*? It's tempting to say Wells or Conrad, but perhaps it was the Occult fiction of Marie Corelli or the interplanetary adventures of Burroughs that made him think here was a publisher who might be open to his novel, which could well be seen as having the seriousness of intent of *Heart of Darkness* combined with the adventurous imagination of *A Princess of Mars*.[111]

Robert Lynd

Methuen handed the manuscript to Robert Lynd (1879–1949), who worked as a reader for the firm, a common sideline for writers at the time. Born in Ulster, Lynd was a journalist, essayist, and had been literary editor of *The Daily News*'s book review section since 1912 (and assistant literary editor for four years before that). A successful literary man of his day, he published a series of collections of essays throughout his career, including *Irish and English*

(1908), *Home Life in Ireland* (1909), *Rambles in Ireland* (1912), *If the Germans Conquered England* (1917), and, on literary topics, *Old and New Masters* (1919), *The Art of Letters* (1920), and *Books and Authors* (1922). He seems not to have had much of a feel for fantasy. *The Daily News* review for Burroughs' *Princess of Mars* (unsigned, so not necessarily by Lynd, but certainly overseen by him), is one of the few negative reviews of the book's UK release, concluding: "The book is for those who not only tolerate but rebel [*sic*] in the super-ultra-extra-grotesque".[112] Later, in a signed review, he would criticise Olaf Stapledon's lightly fantastic novel *Sirius*, about a dog endowed with a human level of intelligence, finding it "repellent as the exhibitions of freak sideshows in old fair grounds..."[113] In *Old and New Masters*, he says of Dostoevsky: "One does not grudge an artist an abnormal character or two. Dostoevsky, however, has created a whole flock of these abnormal characters and watches over them as a hen over her chickens."[114] It's hard not to see these criteria applying to *Nightspore on Tormance*, too.

Nevertheless, Lynd recommended Methuen publish the book, and they accepted—on two conditions. The title had to change to something less obscure, and the manuscript had to be cut by 15,000 words. David complied, making the cuts and accepting Methuen's suggestion of *A Voyage to Arcturus* for the title. His first published novel, then, came out in September 1920, with a sale price of 8s 6d (the same as most of Methuen's novels at the time). The publisher's ad copy read:

> This story of a journey to a distant star is one of the most remarkable romances published for many years. Full of exuberant imagination, of extraordinary energy of creation, it holds the reader's attention from the first page.[115]

The first reviews appeared in the final week of September. The first I've been able to find is from *The Glasgow Herald*, for 24 September (p. 6), and worth quoting in full as an example of the reviewing style of the time:

> To allegorise the human soul searching for truth as a man travelling through a world beset with pitfalls and adventures is not original: it is

> the theme of "Pilgrim's Progress," "The Faerie Queene," part of "Thus Spake Zarathustra," and many other masterpieces. But Mr. Lindsay's treatment of the theme is so new and so wonderful that originality of plan becomes a small matter. Maskull, the searching soul, goes to Tormance, an inhabited planet of Arcturus, seeking Surtur, who is Divine Wisdom. Like Endymion, he finds that his passage leads through unsophisticated beauty, sexual love, passion, terror, pain, and the blackness of despair to a new dawn. Superficiality is the ever-present enemy. The nature of the story lends itself of course to unreality, but even so there is a considerable superfluity of the magical element; the author plunges too frequently into the Wells. It is a pity, too, that he chose such ugly hybrid names as Panawe, Corpang, and Gleameil. Despite its many faults, however, the "Voyage to Arcturus" justifies its claim to be "one of the most remarkable romances published for many years."

As well as Bunyan, Spenser, Nietzsche and Wells (via a somewhat forced pun) in the above, other reviewers compared *Arcturus* to Verne, Dante, Butler, Blake and even Lewis Carroll ("though without the latter's humour"[116]), as well as "Baudelaire, or Poe in his most grisly vein" in the notoriously hostile *Times Literary Supplement* review. The *Manchester Guardian* (1 October 1920, p. 3), after comparing the novel's subject to the sort of essay "one used to write at school on 'England in A.D. 2000'", was the most critical of the prose style:

> It is a pity, of course, that in writing about a world where the intellectual and sense organs are different in kind from our own Mr. Lindsay should be compelled to use a language which is merely human, and not, therefore, commensurate with what he wishes to describe. The restriction thus imposed upon him is evidently an irksome one; it even drives him at times, in his desire to express Tormantian wonders beyond earthly experience, to violate the rules of universal grammar and sound logic and to talk what is perilously near to nonsense. "In their richness," he says about a woman's lips, "they

> seemed like a splash of vivid will on a background of slumbering protoplasm." Now that may be clear enough to anyone who has been to Tormance, but Mr. Lindsay must make allowances for the rest of us who have not.

This seems, though, to be equally a criticism of the novel's imaginative richness, something some critics then (and throughout the first half of the twentieth century) simply didn't know how to take, let alone digest and comment upon. The most egregious example of this is in the *Times Literary Supplement* (30 September, p. 637), whose anonymous reviewer—later revealed to be the novelist and poet Adelaide Mary Champneys (1888–1966)[117]—compared *Arcturus* to the "worst kind of nightmare", a "riot of morbid fancy", and the product of "a temporarily unbalanced mind", all permeated by an air of "uniform unwholesomeness". It's hard to see anything behind this review than a reader's shock at simply not liking this kind of thing, but having to read it anyway—always a bad recipe.

In addition to having her "flesh creep" and "gorge rise", Champneys failed to find any meaning in the book:

> Mr. Lindsay's imagination is prolific rather than powerful, and he has not controlled it towards any coherent result. For instance, the hero of the adventure, Maskull, encounters on his journey in Arcturus a number of entities—human, superhuman, and diabolic—whose relation to him and to each other never becomes clear; nor can we find any connecting link between the startling and often gruesome episodes which mark his progress.

She goes on to suspect "an intention of allegory" in the novel, though only to imply its failure to come through to her. David himself might have objected to the term (he has the artist Peter Copping in *Devil's Tor* say "An allegory is a wall decoration with a label attached"[118]) preferring, instead, the more resonant term "symbolic" ("A symbol is a mystic sign of the Creator", Peter Copping explains). Nevertheless, he surely would have agreed with the looser meaning of "allegory" as a story which foregrounds some deeper

meaning. And although Champneys failed to find any meaning, as did the already-quoted *Manchester Guardian* (who complained of "the murk of impenetrable mystery"), other reviewers did. In addition to the above-quoted review from the *Glasgow Herald*, there's this, from *The Daily News* (13 October, p. 8), where, of course, Robert Lynd was literary editor (though—see further below—this did not mean wholly positive view):

> His story is no ordinary effort on the lines of a voyage to the moon. The world he creates with such astonishing fecundity [is] a world of strange folk with strange deformities, and odd names… He tells the adventures of a man, Maskull, in this amazing world, where men and women can grow limbs, can absorb their fellows, can kill with a kiss, and read a man's thoughts more easily than we understand speech. Mr. Lindsay does succeed in producing an atmosphere violently removed from that of this earth; but all the while there is evident, now deeply, now faintly, an allegorical intention. Maskull at times is man, and all his adventures are the struggles of a man to gain a soul.

But the balance of the reviews was on the side of confusion. Here, for instance, is *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (13 October, p. 4):

> Exactly what the moral of the story is it is not easy to say. Presumably there is a moral. The main idea seems to be a natural spiritual yearning, existing not only on earth, but also on such planets as Tormance, which cannot ever be satisfied.

And here is *The Civil & Military Gazette* (20 March 1921, p. 13), published in Lahore:

> A little easy mysticism without tears threads through the nightmare… But there is very little time for thought in this welter of blue and purple monsters, vegetarians, murderers and scarlet scenery. If the author has a guiding principle he has successfully concealed it, for no clues to the real meaning of this orgy of horrors can be unravelled

even after careful study.

Many reviews, though, found something positive to say, even if it was often qualified. To quote a generous sampling of the reviews' summing up:

> Jules Verne and H. G. Wells have provided us with some masterpieces in vivid imaginative writing, but it is only paying a well-deserved tribute to David Lindsay, the author of "A Voyage to Arcturus", to say that his book will rank alongside their best… [Maskull's] journey through the planet is followed with unabated interest as the writer brings his creative genius into full play. The book is all that is claimed for it—a remarkable romance.
>
> *The Edinburgh Evening News*, 29 September 1920, p. 5

> I do not think Mr. Lindsay has written a successful book; his method is too turgid, and his symbolism runs away with him; but he is a powerful writer, and has the gift of retaining one's interest in material more fantastic than anything previously read in modern imaginative literature.
>
> *The Daily News*, 13 October 1920, p. 8

> The book is full of exuberant imagination, of extraordinary energy of action, and commands the attention of the reader from cover to cover. It is a gripping story of a journey to a distant star, and it throws a new and startling light on many of the deepest problems of human existence. The weird scenes baffle description. This story of strange adventures in an almost unimaginable world, and its solemn note in the life after death, should be read by every man and woman.
>
> *The Wairarapa Daily Times* (New Zealand), 7 December 1920, p. 3

> I do not suppose that a book has ever been written with so frightful a background, but it is possible to read between the lines, and you gather that there is a new philosophy of life behind Mr. Lindsay's neologistic phantasy: this saves *A Voyage to Arcturus* from being a mere nightmare, and invests it not only with a strange dignity of its own,

but also with a particular interest for those who may have studied the sub-conscious mind and its symbols. It is a daring book, not to be skipped lightly for a mere thrill of excitement…

Ralph Straus,[119] *The Bystander*, 16 February 1921, p. 360

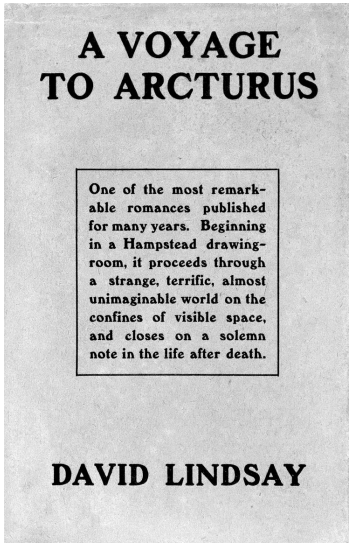
The book reads like an expanded nightmare written down in English, which is almost too good for its subject. But it is worth reading if only for the fertile imagination which the author splashes vigorously upon his pages.

The Civil & Military Gazette (Lahore), 20 March 1921, p. 13

The book is uplifting because there is aglow in it a perceptible pure intent. It is of value because it points to the ideal. But the lady who likes Ethel Dell, and the gent who thinks that Nat Gould is a great writer, will scarcely get through this tale of nightmare adventures in a thousand years.

Frank Morton, *The Sunday Times* (Sydney), 20 March 1921, p. 19

"In a word," says an Australian review from the Adelaide *Register* (8 January 1921, p. 5), "a story that is unique."


A VOYAGE
TO ARCTURUS
One of the most remarkable romances published for many years. Beginning in a Hampstead drawing-room, it proceeds through a strange, terrific, almost unimaginable world on the confines of visible space, and closes on a solemn note in the life after death.
DAVID LINDSAY

Presumably, David would have read at least the reviews that appeared in Britain. He'd later write to E. H. Visiak that he'd received "some quite tolerant and good-natured reviews in the papers—only now, as ever, I don't feel that they touch me or my work".[120]

A Voyage to Arcturus sold less than half its initial print run. (Victor Gollancz would later write that it sold 596 copies, leaving 834 to be remaindered.) This was in the days when a mid-list author would be expected to sell between two and three thousand copies of a novel to keep the publisher in profits, cover their advance, and ensure their next book would be taken up.[121] At the time of its publication, though, David could not have known how his sales would go, and as soon as *A Voyage to Arcturus* was accepted he began work on his second novel.

7

The Haunted Woman

1921–1922

Dedicated "To my wife", *The Haunted Woman* is, on the one hand, the story of a relationship between a young woman and a much older man; on the other, it initiates a theme in David's post-*Arcturus* novels, about how visionary experiences integrate (or fail to) into modern life.

Isbel Loment, the novel's protagonist, is twenty five, and the man she's drawn to, Henry Judge, is fifty eight. Was this thirty three years' age gap a self-mocking exaggeration of the twenty two year gap between David and Jacqueline, with David characterising himself as the old-fashioned, somewhat socially awkward Judge? The two are brought together at Judge's home, Runhill Court, whose oldest part contains rooms, supernaturally hidden to all but a few, that provide a series of elevated experiences: first, a clear vision of oneself with all one's inner potentialities plainly evident; second, a place where one can meet and converse free of social restraints and convention; third, a vision of a world much more vibrantly alive, though one that, perhaps because of its very intensity of passion, is too often fatal. The catch is that these experiences are immediately forgotten upon leaving the hidden rooms, unless it is by some deeper part of the self too thoroughly repressed in everyday life to be recalled except as a vague unease or dissatisfaction.

This second novel was finished in April 1921, whereupon David offered it to Methuen. They declined. He next tried Hutchinson, a firm which had been around only two years longer than Methuen. Founded by Sir George Hutchinson, and now presided over by his son Walter, it had, like Methuen, published works by Marie Corelli and Arthur Conan Doyle (including his Professor Challenger books), as well as Jules Verne, H. Rider Haggard, E. Nesbit, and the ghost stories of E. F. Benson. They also published a number

of magazines, including *Adventure-story Magazine*, which would have made it a good firm for a writer to be associated with. While the novel was with them, though, someone at Methuen suggested the book might be offered to *The Daily News* as a potential serial—where, no doubt, it would have been assessed once again by Robert Lynd, the Reader who recommended Methuen publish *A Voyage to Arcturus*. David withdrew it from Hutchinson and passed it to the *News*. The result was much the same as with *Arcturus*: 20,000 words had to be cut—a far more substantial portion of this shorter novel, amounting to what must have been almost a quarter of the initial manuscript—but it was accepted.

The Daily News had run serial novels between October 1903 (its first being *The Triumph of Love* by Annie E. Holdsworth) and July 1915, when *Fate the Marplot* by F. Thicknesse-Woodington became its last for six years (perhaps as a result of wartime paper shortages, as it also reduced its page count at this time). The practice was restarted in 1921, opening with *The Red House Mystery* by A. A. Milne (who, in these pre-Winnie-the-Pooh days, was known as a playwright and a humorist for *Punch* magazine), which was touted as a "Great Holiday Detective Story". Milne's mystery was followed by *The Haunted Woman*, which was announced on Friday 26 August 1921.

The following day, a brief piece on the coming serial proclaimed it to be by the author of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. The *News* continued:

> The publication of this novel [*Arcturus*], which presented unique problems in a unique setting, directed much attention to the genius of the author, and the "Daily News" in securing "The Haunted Woman" is able to give its readers a romance of a type that is as enthralling as it is original.
>
> Mr. Lindsay is perhaps the first author to give us a living, palpitating love story in what may be described, for want of a better term, as the land of ghosts.[122]

Two days later, a second piece followed:

> As Mr. A. A. Milne's story gave in its conception and its manner of

telling something altogether new among mysteries of crime, so Mr. David Lindsay offers a narrative arresting and indeed engrossing in the presentation of a mystery of the human heart that in its own plane is probably unique.

The story is a story of life and love and tragedy, but perhaps never before has a novelist so convincingly woven his plot of threads both of the tangible and of the unseen.[123]

This short article was accompanied by a small photograph of David with his daughter Diana, not yet two years old, her father's hand around her waist.

David Lindsay and daughter Diana, *The Daily News*, 29 August 1921, p. 5

A glimpse of the Lindsay family's domestic life at this time can be gleaned from the 1921 census, which was carried out on 21 June that year. David (profession: "Author"), Jacqueline and Diana are to be found in Lynscott along with a widowed 52-year-old cook, Emma Singleton, and her 20-year-old daughter Mary Meretta Singleton—listed as a "nurse (domestic)"—both of whom were born in Nelson, Lancashire. (And who would soon leave the Lindsays, as a classified ad in *The Western Morning News* for 12 October 1921 asks for "Lady HELP: house facing sea, near Newquay; small family; help given. State particulars.—Lindsay, Lynscott, Porth, St. Columb Minor." Perhaps this reduction from two servants to one was the start of the Lindsays' cutbacks in expenditure that would follow David's lack of financial success as

a writer.)

David's signature from the 1921 census

Only four days after this census snapshot, Jacqueline and Diana were due to set out by steamship from Liverpool for New York, where Jacqueline was to present her firstborn child to her mother and brothers. For some reason, they had to cancel that trip, and the pair instead left from Southampton on 6 July, aboard the RMS Olympic. (Among the details recorded on arrival in Ellis Island was the person's last address in their country of departure. Jacqueline gave 17 Blackheath Rise, Lewisham—perhaps a more convenient route to reach Southampton, or perhaps as part of a visit to London.) The pair arrived seven days later, and wouldn't be back in the UK until 20 September. Why David didn't accompany them on this trip (or the next, when Jacqueline would take both daughters) can't be known. It's intriguing that *The Haunted Woman*, written before this, begins with the return of Isbel's fiancé, Marshall, from the US.

By Jacqueline and Diana's return, *The Haunted Woman* had begun its serialisation. The novel ran in twenty two instalments from Tuesday 30 August to Friday 23 September, skipping Sundays and one Monday (19 September, when the paper announced there wasn't enough space for the serial, which usually took up half a page or more). The first instalment was accompanied by an illustration depicting Isbel Loment, drawn by the Dundee-born Alick P. F. Ritchie, who usually provided celebrity caricatures for the paper. On 10 September, the *News* printed a back-page article entitled "TO BE CONTINUED: DO YOU READ SERIAL STORIES? LURE OF 'THE HAUNTED WOMAN'." Basically a humour-piece about a man trying *not* to admit to himself how much he has been drawn in by a serial, when various events (leaving the paper at home, a kitten eating the vital page) get in the way of his reading the next instalment, it does nevertheless refer to the events in David's story, showing that the author (journalist, novelist, and short story writer A. G. Thornton) *had* read it:

> …I could have sent the office-boy out for a back number, but why should I give way to a serial? Old man Ulf had built rooms; the staircase led to them. Isbel had gone up them. Well, let her. She could go up spook staircases in every instalment if she liked to make a hobby of going up spook staircases. I would have no more truck with this Lindsay and his preposterous woman. I would not read that day's instalment, nor get a back number. A silly name she had, anyhow…

But as soon as he finds the next instalment, he can't help reading it.

Far more interesting, though, is that this article elicited a reply from what seems to be a genuine reader, whose letter was printed three days later:

> Sir,—Mr. Thornton is interested to know if other men are reading your serial story. I am a woman, but he may like to have my opinion on the matter.
>
> I have not read a "serial" for years. When, however, the preliminary announcement appeared of Mr. Lindsay's story the title attracted me at once. I read the first instalment, and henceforth I am a victim to the lure of "The Haunted Woman." Every morning I find myself longing for my husband and daughter to leave the house for business so that I can have a few minutes alone to read what is happening to Isbel and the others.
>
> One day last week the wrong paper was left. I went to the newsagent about it. He asked me what the fuss was. I said, "Don't you understand that I am reading the serial." He said at once, "It must be good if you read it."
>
> It is good! Yesterday morning after reading the day's instalment I commenced to wonder, and all day I wondered, how did Isbel's vieux rose pink scarf get into Judge's pocket? It's worrying me.
>
> You can see by this that other readers have succumbed to the serial habit.
>
> MANY YEARS A READER.

This seems to have been the only reaction to the serial printed in *The Daily*

News (there was none for Milne's novel), but is a worthwhile reminder that the serialisation of *The Haunted Woman* was setting David's work before the largest potential readership it would receive in his lifetime. In 1921, *The Daily News* had a circulation of around 300,000, something like 5% of the metropolitan newspaper-buying public.[124] Not all would have read the serial, or have stuck with it if they did, but it was a chance for him to find *some* readers, surely, who would be intrigued by what he was doing. One such was the poet Edward Harold Visiak, who became so gripped by the story that he read it while walking down the road, "the tautly outstretched *Daily News* hurrying me on before the wind."[125] He wrote to David, care of the *News*, two days after the concluding part, but the letter was mislaid and not forwarded until October.[126] David's reply mentioned that his novel, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, had come out the previous year ("It was written in rather an unpopular style, and I am afraid has not gone very well"), and ended: "I am greatly obliged to you for your kind appreciation of the second book, which is a distinct encouragement to me in my work."[127]

E. H. Visiak

Visiak was, at the time, a teacher at a boys' school, York House in Hampstead (with whose headmaster, the Reverend Cambridge Victor Hawkins, he had collaborated on a novel, *The War of the Schools*, published in 1912), but had also made something of a name for himself as a poet. His first collections—*Buccaneer Ballads* in 1910, *Flints and Flashes* in 1911, and *The Phantom Ship and Other Poems* in 1912—all followed a nautical theme, while

his 1916 collection *The Battle Fiends* was in part a response to the Great War, against which he had taken a marked stance as a conscientious objector, to the point of refusing to carry out work that supported the war in any way, even leaving his job as a telegraph operator when that was designated as being useful to the war effort.

He had been born Edward Harold Physick in 1878, the first of seven sons of Edward Joseph Physick, a monumental sculptor from several generations of sculptors, originating in Cornwall. ("Visiak" is an archaic form of the Cornish surname Physick, which he adopted for his literary work, and came to use throughout his life.) Unlike David he had a more focused drive to become part of the literary world. As well as publishing poems and essays in the periodicals of the day (even editing one, a short-lived journal for boys called *The Bulldog*, around 1907), he gave lectures on literary subjects (such as "Buccaneer Poetry", and Ludwig Tieck, and even giving a course of lectures in Sweden on such subjects as Milton, and "The Island in Literature"). He associated with other poets and writers, and was a frequent letter-writer to newspapers and periodicals. He was never a major literary figure (though was well-known enough to be parodied at one point in *Punch* magazine[128]), but would eventually earn a Civil List pension for his work as a Milton scholar—and hence would be free of the sort of financial worries that would dog the Lindsays. A couple of years after writing to David, Visiak would set up his own school for boys, Ascham House Preparatory School, at his home, 30 Cavendish Road, Brondesbury, where he lived with his mother Maude (who would live with him until her death in 1952).

During the period of this initial correspondence with David (which would last until 1924), the two exchanged books but did not meet in person. As well as swapping news about how their work was doing, and grumbling about difficulties with publishers or the possibility of finding an agent, they commented on and encouraged each other's work. Visiak's initial response to *Arcturus*, for instance, queried whether David wasn't too harsh in rejecting all beauty, including that which was aesthetically pleasing for its own sake, which Visiak felt was the realm of poetry; David seemed to have been happy just to have someone responding on a serious level to his ideas. He sent Visiak his "Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy", a collection of aphorisms and "aperçues" (as he termed them), which Visiak offered to share with

Walter de la Mare. (David's response was to say he recognised the name, but wasn't sure what de la Mare had written.) It was evident David detected something of a kindred spirit in terms of quality of imagination, and asked if Visiak would write a foreword for *Arcturus* if ever it was reissued. There was no definite reason for this initial period of correspondence between the two to end—most likely its petering out coincided with David's greater difficulties in both writing and finding a publisher after *Sphinx*—but after a gap, the two would reconnect in the 1930s, meet, and become closer.

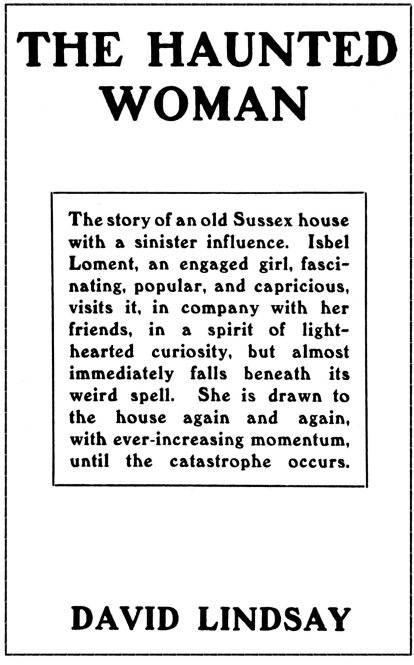
Another friend David made around this time was Robert Henry Barnes, who would become a painter, and be the inspiration for the character Peter Copping in David's 1932 novel *Devil's Tor*. Much younger than David, it's possible the connection might have come about through David's sister Margaret, who seems to have been, or became, a friend of Barnes's mother Florence, the two being of a similar age.

Barnes was born in 1899 in Kennington, London. His father was a lathe-turner (later a foreman) at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich. Soon after, the family moved to Greenwich, then Blackheath, so would have been living in the same area as David during the first decade and a half of the twentieth century. By the time David knew him, though, Barnes had lost both his father (dying of "General paralysis of the insane"—most likely syphilis—in Cane Hill Asylum at the age of forty six), and his brother Stanley (who served in one of the Special Companies deploying poison gas in the Great War, but who died of broncho-pneumonia nine days after Armistice, while still posted abroad). Barnes also seems to have been called up into the army (getting himself baptised at the age of eighteen by an army pastor), but perhaps too late to actually serve overseas. After the War his mother remarried, to Herbert James Score Allen, a sixty-five-year-old estate agent, and Barnes began studying architecture. He'd soon change tack, though, and take up painting at the Royal Academy of Arts. And it was painting, and teaching art, that would be the main focus of his life during the time David knew him. He was also a talented musician.

He and David met in 1921 (when Barnes was twenty two), evidently when David was on a trip back to London from Cornwall, perhaps even the same one from which Jacqueline and Diane departed for New York. Unlike with Visiak, David's friendship with Barnes was mostly carried out in person. (Few

letters survive. One from David, written in 1930, remarks that this is the first time they've corresponded.) They seem to have discussed a wide range of artistic topics. Beethoven was a shared passion. (Knowing the importance of music to David, Barnes would at one point buy him and Jacqueline a piano and a radio.) David gave him a copy of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, which Barnes had re-bound as *Nightspore in Tormance*. Another letter from David acknowledges the receipt of some William Blake prints that Barnes gave to him, and Barnes would later create a small plaster sculpture of a witch that David would have before him while writing his final novel. Barnes would also paint some large-scale scenes from *Arcturus*, and draw a portrait of David.[129]

It was evidently an important friendship, though one, again, that faded after a time, and Barnes (who died in 1989, and so lived to see a revival of interest in his friend's work) would later be an important source of information about David's life.


THE HAUNTED WOMAN
The story of an old Sussex house with a sinister influence. Isbel Loment, an engaged girl, fascinating, popular, and capricious, visits it, in company with her friends, in a spirit of light-hearted curiosity, but almost immediately falls beneath its weird spell. She is drawn to the house again and again, with ever-increasing momentum, until the catastrophe occurs.
DAVID LINDSAY

In October 1921, on the back of the *Daily News* serialisation, Methuen reconsidered their rejection of *The Haunted Woman*. In January the following

year, David would write to Visiak that he had sent off the proofs of his second novel, and on 1 February, the trade organ *The Bookseller* contained the following announcement:

> Messrs. Methuen & Co., are publishing "The Haunted Woman," a new novel by Mr. David Lindsay, author of "A Voyage to Arcturus."

Reviews followed, though fewer than for *Arcturus*. *The Daily News* was perhaps duty-bound to give a long and basically positive review. Mostly summarising the plot, Henry English's piece on 13 February (p. 7) nevertheless ended with some qualification:

> Mr. Lindsay is not a faultless writer, and in his dialogue he permits his characters to be a little underbred at times in the cause of vitality. It is difficult to say at present whether his talent will turn to popular writing or whether he will aim at writing imaginative literature of the kind in which "The Turn of the Screw" is the modern masterpiece. His present book leaves him at the cross-roads. It is popular in manner, while original in invention. It might be described as a ghost story which even those who are indifferent to ghost stories will find absorbing.

The Times Literary Supplement's review of 16 February (p. 110) was less vituperative than its take on *Arcturus*, though still not positive:

> "The Haunted House" would, perhaps, have been a better title… it is the uncanny "spookiness" of the house which gives its character to the novel. Unfortunately the reader will, we think, feel that he is not quite sufficiently carried out of himself by that sense of the supernatural which it is the essence of all good ghost stories to create.

The *TLS*'s reviewer falls into the circular critical trap of assuming the novel ought to be of a certain genre (a ghost story, because it has the word "Haunted" in the title), then damning it for not fitting into that genre. This

became a theme in several reviews. For instance, *The Nation and The Athenaeum* (18 March, p. 901):

> The roar of machinery in Mr. Lindsay's ghost-factory is so deafening that all our senses are dulled by it. Spirits who perform so prodigiously as they do at Runhill Court, messing up even the rotation of the seasons, lack that discretion and reticence which are the indispensable condition of our attention to them. Mr. Lindsay is an excellent mechanic, and is never at a loss for ingenious appliances, but he appears to forget that there are or should be more things in the hell of ghostly visitation than clockwork.

And the Christchurch, New Zealand, *Star* (1 June, p. 4) reviewer was another who failed to be convinced by the supernatural occurrences, rather than seeing them as a conveyor of meaning:

> The story is not exactly convincing—the psychic things are too material, and it is difficult to swallow the suite of rooms and the teakwood stairs. The book, published by Methven [*sic*] and Co., should interest those who like tales of mystery or the supernatural.

The Daily Telegraph, reviewing the novel as late as 5 September (p. 4), concluded somewhat ambiguously:

> This fantasy is recorded with a matter-of-factness and prosaic attention to detail that will disarm the criticism of credulous and incredulous alike!

Even the ostensibly positive take of *The Edinburgh Evening News*, for 18 February (p. 4), has an overtone of polite praise rather than outright approval:

> Mr David Lindsay would probably be the first to admit that "The Haunted Woman" does not possess the same brilliant imaginative distinction as "A Voyage to Arcturus," but this does not detract one

> single iota from the quality of his latest volume… It is a clever and fascinating story, and should enhance the author's reputation in the literary sphere.

A positive view came from the New Zealand *Dominion* (19 August, p. 16), however, whose reviewer concluded:

> The story, which possesses several well-drawn secondary characters, is very well written, and in its own uncanny way is decidedly fascinating.

One thoroughly positive take on the novel, though, came in *The Occult Review* (month unknown, and seemingly only in the UK edition of this periodical). Signed "HJS", it obviously comes from a different angle than the daily paper reviews, but feels more accurate than any of them, so is worth quoting in full:

> "The Haunted Woman" is hardly an adequate title for this novel, the motif of which is something much more original than mere haunting by spooks. Rather is it a story of the fourth dimension, a story of elfin glamour, whereby a normally rather stolid girl undergoes a change of consciousness under the eerie influence of a spell-ridden old house at Steyning, and knows herself for what she is—the soul affinity of an elderly gentleman, a dignified and noble character, and owner of the queer old house. Once away from the magic precincts, however, all memory is lost, except a vague feeling of *something strange* having occurred. The disappearance of a scarf, the finding of a hairpin, little happenings fraught with great significance, are the only indications of anything abnormal happening. Yet these are perhaps more effective for holding the interest than the strongest hair-raising sensationalism. The atmosphere of enchantment and the skilful interchange of the normal and supernormal states of consciousness, grip the reader, as they do the characters of the novel, in a spell which is not broken until the intensely dramatic climax is attained, which is not until almost the last page. Withal, this story of a secret stairway which leads to another

> world, a world of spiritual reality rather than human convention, should afford readers no small measure of enjoyment.

By this time, again, David had begun his next novel. But, surely at least partly as a result of the disappointing reactions to his work so far, he was finding the writing more difficult.

8

Sphinx

1921–1923

David began his third novel in August 1921, while *The Haunted Woman*'s serialisation was underway, and his wife and daughter were in America. We don't know how difficult or easy he'd found his first two (the only clue seems to be a comment made in a letter to E. H. Visiak, that "my books up to the present have turned out quite other than I have originally intended"[130]), but with his third novel he seems to have run into difficulties, at one point giving up, then resuming again in October (notably, the month when Methuen reconsidered their rejection of *The Haunted Woman*). He finished the first draft in March the following year, and revised it until May.[131]

Sphinx begins with Nicholas Cabot arriving at the village of Newleigh to dedicate himself to perfecting a machine that will record dreams—not the dreams we recall on waking, but the "dreams we dream during deep sleep and remember nothing of afterwards".[132] Throughout the course of the novel he plays several recorded dreams to Evelyn, the middle daughter of the house where he's staying, and these prove to concern a local woman composer, Lore Jensen, whose early musical inspiration has given way to more commercially-viable but emptier work, while she herself has sunk into cynicism, bad company, and drug abuse. The dreams show her situation as viewed from a series of higher realities, where her emotional and spiritual difficulties are revealed to have an entirely different nature.

Sphinx, then, clearly continues David's theme of there being a more authentic reality beyond the material world, and how difficult it is to retain the moments of vision by which we perceive it. But it's also a novel about creativity, and perhaps about David's own particular version of creativity, and its state during the writing of this book.

In *A Voyage to Arcturus*, the medium Backhouse says, of the apparitions he summons into existence, that he "dreams with open eyes"; in *Sphinx*, Nicholas Cabot has created a machine for recording dreams. Both characters claim to present visions with a plain, objective clarity: they are merely revealing or recording, acting as impersonal conduits, not as artists. In a similar way, as a writer, David seems to have deliberately avoided an explicit literary style, at least in these earlier novels, as though to eschew any hint of subjective colouring to his imaginative visions. (In *Sphinx*, he's clearly somewhat contemptuous of "belles-lettres".) His ideal seems to have been to relate action, description and character as simply as possible. (As Krag says: "Try and simplify your ideas, my friend. The affair is plain and serious."[133]) In *Arcturus*, for instance, descriptions can sometimes be mere lists of adjectives: Joiwind's face is "fresh, nervous, and girlish", Panawe's eyes are "black, quiet, and fathomless", a far-off mountain is "brooding, mysterious, and waiting", a fruit's taste is "hard, bitter, and astringent", and so on. In this, it's possible to see why some critics complain about his prose style, but David wasn't trying to be *liked*, he was trying to relate what he believed to be the truth, and in what he believed to be the most appropriate way: plainly, with no attempt to persuade or beguile. It's as Kent-Smith says, of the séance in *A Voyage to Arcturus*: "An occasion like this ought to be simple, to guard against the possibility of deception…"[134] Or as Backhouse says earlier: "Nature is one thing, and Art is another."[135]

Visionary experience, in David's fiction, is removed from day-to-day life by supernatural barriers. In *Arcturus*, it is the remote realm of Muspel; in *The Haunted Woman*, it is the spring-like world of the archaic and somehow more authentic past, as seen from the third of the hidden rooms in Ulf's Tower; in *Sphinx*, it is the "dreams we dream during deep sleep", then forget upon waking. In all three, the return to our reality is accompanied by forgetfulness. For David, this visionary realm is most closely associated with music (he even calls it the "Three Musics" in his final novel, *The Witch*). In his novels music is often the key that unlocks visionary potential. In *Arcturus*, we have Mozart's Temple Music, which turns Backhouse's séance into a quest for the sublime realm of Muspel. In *The Haunted Woman* there's the mysterious musician, whose melody summons feelings of such passionate intensity (passion being the very substance of Muspel) that it can kill. In *Sphinx*, the glimpse of the

visionary core of the novel comes through dreams, but also through the more authentically-inspired early music of Lore Jensen.

This visionary/musical core is often associated with women, or the feminine, in David's fiction. The Temple Music in *Arcturus* is there because of Mrs Jameson; in *Sphinx*, the visionary music comes from Lore Jensen. (In *The Haunted Woman*, the musician is male, but a man who has, for the time, a feminized aspect. As Isbel says of his brightly coloured clothes and long hair: "Is it a man, or a tulip?"[136]) Later in David's writing, this feminine aspect would become more and more explicitly divine, with Anthony in *The Violet Apple*, in the midst of a visionary state, seeing his soul-mate Haidee as angelic, like "the Holy Virgin in visitation" or "Eve, immediately before the expulsion";[137] while in *Devil's Tor* and *The Witch*, we have actual goddesses.

David explained this mix of the objective masculine and the visionary feminine in a letter to E. H. Visiak. Discussing creativity, he wrote that "all the works of creative genius are the children of the union of the male and female elements" within their creators—a conventional enough idea for the time, but he goes on:

> Moreover, 'male' and 'female', in my opinion, are not to be understood metaphorically, but literally. The male body contains female atoms and combinations of atoms, and in genius the proportion of this female element is larger than in the generality of men.[138]

So creativity, for David, was about the coming together of the objective writer and the inspired visionary, the machine-like transcriber and the passionate music of truer realities, the male and the female—and the coming together of a male and female character is a core element of *The Haunted Woman*, *Sphinx*, *The Violet Apple*, *Devil's Tor* and *The Witch*, a significant presence throughout *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*, and provides the final disillusioning experience for Maskull in *A Voyage to Arcturus*.

Read with this model in mind, *Sphinx* seems to capture a creative crisis. Lore Jensen, who represents the visionary core of creativity, has become compromised by commerciality—she even, at one point, gets engaged to a

music critic, as though not merely laying her work at the door of public taste, but her very heart. Nicholas Cabot, meanwhile, is the most objective of creative artists, by not being creative at all—he uses a machine to record dreams, as though to admit no subjectivity whatsoever. And these two characters are, throughout the novel, either indifferent to one another or at odds. Despite the fact that the dreams Nicholas records seem to predict tragedy for Lore Jensen, he's strangely reluctant to take any action, and Lore herself is resistant to taking any warning that's offered. It's as though the objective writer and his vision were squabbling, or not talking—struggling with the question of whether to please a public or remain true to one's vision, and in the meantime suffering as a result of not being true to oneself. At the end, Nicholas and Lore are united, as though they are naturally part of one thing: one creative system, the visionary and the objective recorder. But this only happens—as so often, for David—in another, higher reality, as though to say that such a perfect accord cannot occur in *our* world.

As to his actual working habits, David would get up early to write, continue throughout the morning and, often, the early part of the afternoon. He wrote on the typewriter, and for his final drafts would retype an entire page at even the slightest mistake. As the years went on, he might start working later and finish earlier, but would still work regularly.

In early May, David sent the manuscript of *Sphinx* to Methuen, but once more they declined. He next tried *The Daily News*, but they weren't printing serials now. He next tried Heinemann, but, whether he knew it or not, that firm was going through changes at this time. After the sudden death of its founder in 1920, it had been sold to the American publisher Doubleday. (And would soon go through a further crisis when its other motivating force, Sydney Pawling, would die in December of this year.) Whatever the reason, they too rejected the novel.

David tried a different tactic, and contacted some agents. In a letter to E. H. Visiak, he mentions dealings with Curtis Brown and Watts and Co.—that is, A. P. Watt, his brother's literary agents—but found them "somewhat lacking in zeal".[139] He tried another publisher, Grant Richards, perhaps best known today for launching the Worlds Classics series which was acquired and continued by the Oxford University Press. They, too, declined. (And would go out of business in 1926.)

It seems likely David would also have tried the publisher R. Cobden-Sanderson, who had "spontaneously"[140] offered to publish *The Haunted Woman* the previous year, though David had just placed it with Methuen. Better known as a designer, Richard Cobden-Sanderson had only embarked on publishing as recently in 1919. Perhaps his most well-known contribution to the literary world was T. S. Eliot's *Criterion* magazine, which he published between 1922 and 1926 (after which it was taken up by Faber).

At some point, David decided to try another agent, and this time had some luck. Ronald Thornhill Edmonds Massey had been born in 1886, in Eltham in Kent. His father, Edmonds Massey, is listed in the 1901 census as a "Stock Jobber", recalling Lang from the opening chapter of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Before the war, Massey had been art editor for *The Bystander*, where he'd also reviewed books and had at least one story ("The Wedding Present" in 1912) published. Around 1921, he set himself up as a literary agent with representatives in New York, Paris, Antwerp, Johannesburg, and Wellington. He also represented artists and illustrators, and seems to have been involved in theatrical productions, too. By 1926 he was advertising himself as "The only British Agency in Los Angeles, Hollywood, the world centre of the kinema industry",[141] and soon after this his agency became a limited company.

Despite having his fingers in so many pies, Massey would have some success for David, placing *Sphinx* with John Long in April 1923—almost a year after the manuscript was finished. The publishing firm of John Long had been formed in 1887, and had offices on Fleet Street in London, as well as further offices in Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. It would later be incorporated into Hutchinson & Co., but at this time was still independent. Authors in its stable who were popular at the time included Edgar Wallace, Zane Grey, Guy Boothby (creator of the criminal mastermind Dr Nikola), Nat Gould (writer of popular novels about horse racing), William Le Queux (remembered today for his speculative invasion-of-Britain stories) and Robert W. Chambers.

By this time, the Lindsay family had expanded again. David and Jacqueline's second daughter, Helen Elizabeth, was born on 1 November 1922. Some time after this, they would move house, as a cost-saving measure, from Lynscott to the slightly more modest Trevelgue House, about half a mile

away and slightly further inland. When the Lindsays would later advertise it for rent (presumably when they took off for a holiday), they described it as as a "Furnished Farmhouse", five minutes from the sea, with five bedrooms, two sitting rooms, a bath (with hot and cold water), and large gardens. This house move occurred some time between May 1923 and January 1924. (Lynscott, meanwhile, went to a Mrs. Coburn, who let out rooms; it would eventually be joined with the house next door and become the Porth Beach Hotel.)

Sphinx was published in November 1923, and reviews began to appear at the very end of the year. The focus of these was on the novelty of the dream-recording machine, which two reviewers likened to a gramophone, and one described as "an invention for 'photographing' dreams",[142] but none made the most obvious connection (for a modern reader, anyway) with cinema. Perhaps David was more up-to-date than he might seem nowadays. (In an echo of the reviews of his brother's novels a decade earlier, one reviewer even described *Sphinx* as "a tale of ultra-modern Hampshire".[143]) Interestingly, one reviewer, in the New Zealand *Otago Witness*, did point out that "[t]here seems no reason why the machine should not record waking thoughts as well as dreams",[144] something perhaps too mundane for David to have considered, but certainly a more practical invention.

The earliest review I can find is in the *Times Literary Supplement* (27 December 1923, p. 910), which, again, was negative, though not as vituperative as their take on *A Voyage to Arcturus*. After a plot summary, it concludes:

> It is difficult to work up much interest in all the fuss that follows, or in the fantastic element introduced by the dream apparatus. Nor does even the tragic end of the tale arouse much emotion.

A similar response came from *The Sheffield Independent* (15 February 1924, p. 4), who, interestingly, reviewed the book along with another under the collective title of "Scottish Novels" and identified David as "a Scotsman". This reviewer felt that:

> Mr. Lindsay set out with the determination of producing a novel that

> was out of the ordinary. He has succeeded, but the result is hardly likely to be popular… The difficulty is to understand why all these queer folk are introduced into the story at all, and it is more difficult to understand what the author's idea was in writing the story. Perhaps that is why the book is called "Sphinx."

Another who failed to be moved by the ending was the reviewer for the New Zealand *Otago Witness* (22 July 1924, p. 66), who, despite admitting that "the author shows considerable imaginative power, particularly in the description of a recorded dream", goes on to say:

> But the characters do not grasp; Nicholas himself quite fails to stir interest, and the tragedies of the story fail to move.

Being unmoved, though, was not a universal response. The reviewer for *The Leeds Mercury* (28th December 1923, p. 5):

> reach[ed] the end moved indeed by the sombre climax of the tragedy, but a little mystified and puzzled to make out what it was all about and what in the secrecy of their hearts these women were really after.

This reviewer seems to have found the predominance of female characters in the book something of a challenge, as he (unnamed, but undoubtedly male) admits:

> Mr. Lindsay seems quite at home in the vortex of feminine intrigue to which he presents us. He seems to understand women and assumes that we do too.

The most positive two reviews came from Scottish papers. *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* (11 January 1924, p. 2), for instance:

> Mr Lindsay can write of the supernatural in such a way as to make you "grue," and tragedy is sensed from the beginning. The

> characterisation is good, the atmosphere somewhat Bohemian, but the parts wherein the supernatural are described are well done.

And *The Dundee Courier* (17 January 1924, p. 7):

> David Lindsay's first book, "A Voyage to Arcturus", was a striking romance of another world, and achieved a considerable success d'estime. This one is a cleverly written story revealing a wonderful and highly imaginative genius… Strikingly weird and original is Mr Lindsay's idea of a dream box containing a super-sensitive film which receives the thought waves of a sleeper, which can be reproduced later when the dream is awake.

The only clue as to how well *Sphinx* sold perhaps lies in the fact that John Long did not accept David's next novel.

9

The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly

1924–1928

At the start of 1924, David was in negotiations with the publisher Jonathan Cape, who had offered to put out a book of short stories by him, on condition he granted them the rights to the rest of his work. The firm had only been established in 1921, its founder Herbert Jonathan Cape having previously worked for Duckworth before serving in the Great War. (Born in 1879, he was only a little younger than David.) Their first editor and reader was Edward Garnett (1868–1937), who certainly would not have been averse to the fantastic in literature, as his father Richard had written a book of mythologically-themed stories (*Twilight of the Gods*, published in 1888), and his son David had recently penned an award-winning animal-transformation tale (*Lady into Fox*, published in 1922). It should have been a dream offer, but David's existing contract with John Long gave *them* the rights to his work "for some time to come",[145] so it would never come to pass.

And what was he working on, at this time? While he was looking for a publisher for *Sphinx*, he had begun a novel called *The Ancient Tragedy*. He'd dropped this in June 1922, and sporadically restarted it in July and October. Then in June 1923—shortly after *Sphinx*'s acceptance by John Long—he returned to this new novel, finishing it in October. He sent it to publishers including John Long, Andrew Melrose, R. Cobden-Sanderson, Fisher Unwin, Werner Laurie and Duckworth, but found no takers. It was, in the end, never published, and its manuscript does not survive—though, as Pick writes, it was most likely an early form of his next major novel, *Devil's Tor*.[146]

In October 1922—presumably when his latest stint on *The Ancient Tragedy* dried up—David started a different project, seemingly with a more commercial intent, or perhaps meant as a lighter work to break himself out of

his difficulties with more deeply-considered novels. Initially titled *The Enterprises of Monsieur de Mailly*, it is set at the very start of the eighteenth century, in the France of the "Sun King" Louis XIV. David's youthful enthusiasm for the novels of Dumas, including *The Three Musketeers*, had led to an interest in memoirs of that historical period, so he was well-prepared to attempt a piece set in those times (and which incorporated a number of real people from the period). The novel was finished in May 1923 (after which he would return, presumably refreshed, to *The Ancient Tragedy*), and it, too, started to go the rounds of publishers.

The third novel David worked on during this period was *The Violet Apple*, begun in February 1924, and finished by July the same year. It was rejected by John Long, after which David seems to have had second thoughts about the book. He began revisions on it in March 1925, and (perhaps re-enthused by the acceptance of *Monsieur de Mailly* for publication) did so again in February 1926, after which he seems to have sent it out to one more publisher, before giving up on it entirely. (That publisher was probably Gollancz. When Colin Wilson tried to get them to bring out *The Violet Apple* in the mid-1960s, Victor Gollancz was initially excited by the idea of a new book by Lindsay, then realised this was one he'd already read and rejected. In that case, this final submission of *The Violet Apple* would have to have been after David met Gollancz in 1929.) It would not be published during his lifetime, but at least, this time, the manuscript survived, meaning it would eventually be published during the "Lindsay revival" of the 1970s.

The only one of these novels to achieve publication in David's lifetime, *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* (as it came to be called) could almost be considered a book of short stories linked by a recurring central character. These post-Sherlock Holmes days were rife with series characters in both long and short form: Algernon Blackwood's John Silence, William Hope Hodgson's Carnacki, H. C. NcNiele's Bulldog Drummond, Agatha Christie's Hercules Poirot and Miss Marple, P. G. Wodehouse's Jeeves and Wooster. David's version mixes Holmes's cerebral element with the swordplay of the Musketeers. An ex-soldier, down on his luck and seeking a way to make money in the Paris of Louis XIV, Gaston de Mailly hits on the idea of offering his services to a local lawyer, for solving cases which "are of the wrong size and shape"[147] for the law. The first to come his way concerns a man

whose rich uncle is being pursued by a widow, a marriage which would take away the nephew's chance of a sizeable inheritance. Another case involves a man tricked into marrying the wrong twin; yet another takes de Mailly into the court of the Sun King himself, where he must avoid humiliation at the hands of sophisticated and cynical courtiers. The odd thing is, if he really *was* intended as a pulp-style hero, de Mailly doesn't always triumph, but several times finds himself outwitted—always by the women he is up against, though, never the men. His final "adventure", which takes up almost half the book, is convoluted by de Mailly's figuring out and countering an already complicated conspiracy, and perhaps the best comment on the novel as a whole is Pick's, that "A writer who is more interested in theme and purpose than in plot tends to overdo the elaboration and intricacy of any story in which plot is a major consideration."[148] Perhaps, in its labyrinthine complexity, we get a glimpse of the overthinking that so involved David in the world of chess that it lead to a breakdown.

The Violet Apple, meanwhile, is closer to David's other post-*Arcturus* novels, in that it's about the coming together of a man and a woman through a shared visionary experience. Here, the visions come from eating a fruit grown from the seed of the apple cast aside by Adam and Eve as they were exiled from Eden. Unlike *Sphinx*, but similar to elements of *The Haunted Woman*, the vision is not of another reality but of one's own and others' inner nature. In the heights of his visionary state, playwright Anthony Kerr realises how *naked* his deepest emotions are written on his face, and sees this as the real meaning of Adam and Eve's realisation, upon eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that they were "naked". Looking upon the woman who urged him to eat the fruit, Haidee Croyland, he sees her as almost a goddess, and falls to his knees. But there's a characteristic twist: after the ecstatic visions, the come-down. Not only do the visions fade, but life, afterwards, is left insipid and uninspired. Anthony finds he can no longer write; Haidee, who was to have helped in a friend's fashion house, has lost her aesthetic sense. Then a further, quieter and non-supernatural moment of insight leads Anthony to vow that he and Haidee should unite in seeking those heights once more, this time through their own determined efforts, not thanks to some ancient psychedelic fruit.

How much of Anthony's mental state—both the visionary and the

despondent—had David experienced himself? It's easy to imagine, perhaps, him sharing Anthony's disillusioned view of writing:

> Art—the stillborn travesty of life! A remarkable poem, or play, or picture, or statue, was produced; that was, it was pieced together and chipped and polished after the conception of the original single thought which resulted from a perverted instinct of motherhood; and it was presented to a number of admiring or critical persons, who praised, or failed to praise, it on the ground that it assisted, or failed to assist, their own spiritual development, when all the time it remained a mere dead symbol of an impossible isolation and repose, not to be found in real life…[149]

But, though the journey is a harrowing one, the novel is ultimately optimistic. For perhaps the first time, David presents an answer to the question of what to do about those moments of vision or insight that disappear in the withering light of everyday life: seek to regain them by one's own efforts, step by step, however long it takes.

As well as these novels, there is one more writing project David undertook around this time. In 1928, he began work on a screen adaptation of *The Haunted Woman*. Although never finished, he started to tackle the task of representing the novel's supernatural elements and revelations in the silent cinema of the day, breaking it down into scenes, and changing the order of the narrative from the novel. This was never finished, but it's worth noting David's interest in the burgeoning cinema of the day, and his seeing it as a medium either for commercial exploitation or artistic expression.[150] (It's possible, of course, his agent, with his connection to "the kinema industry", might have prompted the experiment.)

In September 1924, Jacqueline took their two daughters (now aged nearly five and three-and-a-half years old) to New York, presumably to present young Helen to Jacqueline's mother and brothers, as she had with Diana three years previously. As before, David didn't accompany them, and this was a much longer trip—they returned in early January the following year,

meaning Jacqueline and the two girls were away from David for just over three months, a period which included Christmas and Diana's fifth birthday.

L. H. Myers

In September 1925, David received a letter that, according to Pick,[151] was the one that meant the most to him. It was from L. H. Myers, a writer whose career was only a little younger than David's (aside from a self-published verse-play, he had, at this time, two novels to his name, *The Orissers* in 1922, and *The "Clio"* in 1925) but he had been more successful than David, both critically and in terms of readership.

Myers wrote:

> About six months ago I read *A Voyage to Arcturus* for the first time. I have read it again since, and was still more impressed by it on a second reading. I don't, as a rule, care much about books of that kind—for the reason that, to create a successful fantasy, one must possess first a strong, deep, personal intuition, and, secondly, a very powerful imagination, and these qualities are of course rare. But your intuition was, I am convinced, strong and urgent, and your imagination seems to me to have been quite equal to its task.
>
> I am therefore full of admiration and curiosity. These are the sentiments which prompt me and, I hope, excuse the letter. There are many questions which I should like to put to you, and I should very

> much like to meet you. If you live in London, and feel on your side sufficiently good-natured, or flattered, or curious, to accept an invitation to lunch with me one day at my Club, I should be very pleased.[152]

Leopold Hamilton Myers is perhaps best known today for being the son of F. W. H. Myers (1843–1901), the classical scholar and literary critic who co-founded the Society for Psychical Research. F. W. H.'s massive work, *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, was brought out in a "popular" edition after his death thanks to his son's abridging it into a more digestible size.

L. H. Myers himself was a deeply conflicted man. Born in 1881, he was sent to Eton, where he excelled at athletics, but hated the school's hierarchical air of privilege. As a young man he was drawn towards the Bloomsbury Group (whose number included the son of Jonathan Cape's editor, David Garnett), but turned against them for their snobbish attitudes. Yet, he would later try to forbid his own daughter from marrying beneath her. When he fell in love with a slightly older woman, he agreed to wait several years until she felt she could be sure of him, but after the marriage he proceeded to have a series of long-term affairs. Perhaps most markedly, despite being extremely wealthy, he nevertheless espoused socialistic values, believing inequality to be the root cause of so many of the world's evils. Bloomsbury diarist Frances Partridge wrote of a moment when she challenged him on this contradiction:

> Once when lunching at Claridges I couldn't help commenting on the contrast between our surroundings (oozing money and privilege) with the [socialistic] theories he was propounding. "Yes, I know," he said, "but that has absolutely no bearing on their validity."[153]

Myers was capable of great generosity. When George Orwell needed a better climate for his health, Myers gave money to Orwell's friends to pass on to him anonymously, funding his convalescence in Marrakesh. He let the leftwing inventor, adventurer, polymath and journalist Geoffrey Pyke use his London flat (which, as a result, MI5 thought of as a centre of Communist

activity) and paid all his expenses and bills. He bought up numerous copies of *A Voyage to Arcturus* and gave them to his friends—and it would be interesting to know which friends, for Myers had several significant literary friendships, including with the writers L. P. Hartley and Olaf Stapledon, and the critic Desmond MacCarthy (who would later champion *Devil's Tor*).

Whether David did go to Myers's club—The Union, at Carlton House Terrace in London[154]—or not, Sellin says he would, when David was later living in Sussex, take him out for long rides in his Rolls Royce, talking endlessly about his difficulties with women, something David eventually came to find trying, particularly as he had his own worries. For now, though, Myers' friendship was nothing but a positive—David would describe Myers in a letter to Visiak as "a rich, retired man of great artistic seriousness"[155]—and he would prove to be of some practical use when it came to looking for a publisher for *Devil's Tor*.

But that was in the future. Soon after the letter from Myers, in November 1925, the publisher Andrew Melrose expressed an interest in *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*. They wouldn't fully accept until February of the following year, but it was certainly better than a rejection.

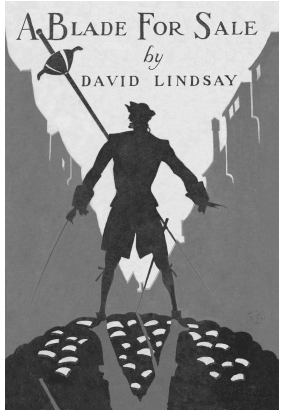
Melrose was another publishing firm which, created in 1899, was still under the control of its founder, Andrew Melrose (1860–1928), who was described, in his *Times* obituary, as "an extremely shrewd, somewhat dour Scotsman, possessing a keen sense of literary values".[156] The 1922 *Literary Yearbook* lists the firm's interests as "General literature, fiction, theological works, etc.",[157] and it was works of theology that they seem to have been most known for at the time. It's hard to find a recognisable name among their stable of authors, though they published the first work by T. F. Powys (brother of Llewelyn and John Cowper Powys). The business would be taken over by Hutchinson in 1927.

Before *de Mailly* was published, David received a windfall of a more sombre nature. His aunt Mildred Couchman died in May 1926, at the age of eighty eight. David's sister was the executrix of her will, which included a bequest of £1,000 for David—worth around £50,000 in 2024, and so a welcome boost to his finances. (Mildred left money to almost all her surviving relatives, including David's brother's widow Florence, who received £100, and one Barbara Lindsay Hilson—also £100—which can only have

been Jessie Barbara Hilson, the cousin David was at one time to marry.)

With Mildred dead, David's mother and sister would soon move from the house they had lived in since the disappearance of David's father so many years ago, meaning David would no longer visit the house and area he had grown up in. In September 1927, 17 Blackheath Rise was advertised for auction. Bessy and Margaret moved to Croydon—in fact, to the same road, Mapledale Avenue, as Robert Barnes and his mother and step-father—which is where Bessy would die only a couple of years later, on 31 May 1928, having also reached the age of eighty eight. She was cremated and her ashes interred along with Mildred's, and David's brother Alexander's, in Theodore Couchman's monument in Ladywell Cemetery. David was recorded as being present at the death.

Between Mildred and Bessy's death, Jacqueline's mother died. Yetta Silverman passed away in a New York hospital on 5 November 1927, after a stroke. Jacqueline would make no more trips to the United States, and it seems her brothers did not visit her—no records exist of them making the trip to the UK, anyway. But Yetta might have been given some comfort about her daughter's financial security when David's latest novel was published not only in Britain, but in the United States, too.



The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly came out in Britain in October 1926. The US edition, retitled *A Blade for Sale*, came out the following March. In its adverts, this is how Melrose (rather stiffly) presented the book:

> The hero whose adventures are here set forth, is a most engaging rogue, and so well realised that he may well be regarded as something of a creation in fiction.

The first British review I can find is from north of the border, in *The Scotsman* (7 October 1916, p. 2):

> Monsieur D'Artagnan himself had not more courage and enterprise, more skill and good fortune in a combat of rapiers or of wits, more facility in getting into a tight place and address in getting out of it scatheless, than had Monsieur de Mailly, the hero of Mr David Lindsay's ingenious and clever romance of "cloak and sword." … we may expect to hear more of him. A hero so instant in thought, word, and deed is not to be lightly parted with.

There were not many reviews, though. *The Spectator*'s take (9 October, p. 605) was a pithy "The book is full of excitement" (nevertheless, Melrose quoted it in adverts for the book). A more detailed positive take came from *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (28 October, p. 8):

> …a gay, rollicking story of French life in the old days, when Versailles was alive with courtiers, and duels were the order of the day. Intrigue was rife, and in a veritable maelstrom of political villainy the hero disports himself with the vivacity and energy of a Dumas musketeer.

While *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* (13 December, p. 2) was perhaps the only one to hint at a criticism:

> De Mailly is an engaging rogue—a gentleman of fortune and an excellent swordsman—endowed with an impetuous nature and nimble wits which are continually getting him into, and out of, hot water… The novel, if a trifle episodic, is dramatic and human in its quick situations.

Presumably *de Mailly* got a US edition thanks to the efforts of David's agent—provided he *was* still with Ronald Massey at this time—whose adverts proclaimed he had strong connections abroad. The book's US publisher, Robert McBride, had been established in 1912 (and opened a London branch in 1915). Among the authors they had already published were two comical fantasists, Thorne Smith and James Branch Cabell (whose *Jurgen: A Comedy of Justice*, published by McBride, had stood trial for obscenity in 1919).

A Blade for Sale received perhaps twice as many notices as the British edition, some so brief as to be nothing more than notices. There were a few light criticisms, as with this from the Alabama *Birmingham News* (10 April, p. 16):

> The book opens very pleasantly and one anticipates great enjoyment. Yet the present writer, for some reason, rather tired of it and even before he reached half way he laid it aside… However it is only fair to say that probably that was caused by a personal prejudice, for he is one who desires that stories of action and adventure should have plenty of both. This M. De Mailly is a bit too given to talking and to subtle manoeuvring to be the ideal hero for a thriller.

But generally the reviews were positive. Most effusive, perhaps, was Philip Coan, writing in the *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (15 May, Book Section p. 17):

> M. de Mailly pleases us more than do the ordinary ruck of genteel antique adventurers, because something rich and spontaneous, no doubt, went into the making of him. He does not lead a consecutive life; on the contrary, an episodic one. The book is virtually four separate stories, as one would note if he did not plunge so eagerly from one adventure into the next. He is none of your dull constant adventurers who stick to one line of trouble all through the volume. He flits from peril to peril, as the humming bird flits from blossom to blossom, in pure exuberance… And yet his doings have go and the story its moments of mood and feeling. One likes above all M. de Mailly and his boyish readiness in personal encounter.

The general feeling, as expressed by *The New York Times*, was that *A Blade for Sale* was a "pleasant bit of Summer reading":

> Mr. Lindsay has liberally treated the plot with humor, mystery, romance and action, a combination that will prove popular with readers of varied tastes.
>
> *The New York Times*, 12 June 1927, p. 24

> Stirring cut-and-thrust romance of France in the latter years of King Louis XIV…
>
> *The Hartford Courant*, 13 March 1927, p. D-6

> Mr. Lindsay has woven a fetching tale… There is a refrain of Dumas noticeable throughout the book with the characteristic graphic portrayal and sustaining realism. This is the sort of book especially made for the Douglas Fairbanks type of cinema. Absorbingly interesting.
>
> E. M. Kirby, *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore), 18 June 1927, p. 6

Evidently, *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly/A Blade for Sale* was a more easily reviewable book, its story and style much more communicable to readers—just mention the Three Musketeers and "a gentleman adventurer", a "soldier of fortune", "a most engaging rogue", and they would know what to expect.

Did it sell well? Either it didn't sell enough for Melrose or McBride to ask David for a sequel, or David (perhaps buoyed by the financial security of that money from his aunt's will) had his sights on something more substantial—and this he certainly had, for his next book was one he'd refer to as his "monster".

10

Ferring and Devil's Tor

1928–1932

In 1928, the Lindsays moved from Trevelgue to Ferring, another small coastal village next to a larger resort, this time Worthing in Sussex. Initially, they lived in a house called Greenways, a short way off the main village thoroughfare of Sea Lane. Greenways had been built relatively recently (in 1926), but, either because it had always been meant as a temporary home, or another more suitable one was found, the family moved in October 1929 to Meadowbank, also just off Sea Lane. Some indication of the size of Meadowbank can be gleaned from the fact that, after the Lindsays sold it in 1938, it would become the Ferring Health School for Girls. (It has subsequently been demolished and turned into Sea Lane Gardens.)[158]

The reason for the move was partly down to the "oppressive wild weather"[159] of the Cornwall coast, but also Jacqueline's concerns for finding a good school for the girls. By the time of the move into Meadowbank, Diana was almost ten and Helen nearly seven. Diana would soon be attending the Worthing High School for Girls on South Farm Road, while Helen would go to St Brandan's Kindergarten and Preparatory School, at Broadwater Road, also in Worthing. Another benefit was that, being closer to London, David could more easily visit publishers, and friends could more easily visit the Lindsays.

(There was still unfinished business in Cornwall, even as late as October 1930, when David was having to apply to the Newquay County Court for repayment of £24 15s 9d—roughly the equivalent of £2,000 in 2024—in rent arrears from a Samuel Worthington and John Brown, having already tried doing so via the Truro County Court. This pair seem to have been farmers—they made an earlier, unrelated, court appearance three years before,

charged by the RSPCA with transporting fowl in such poor conditions that three of the birds died—so this could be relating to use of the farmland alongside Trevelgue House, or it could be for the house itself.)

Ferring was a small village that had, in this decade, started to expand, mostly thanks to the building of holiday homes. The adjoining town of Worthing had become a fashionable resort in the eighteenth century, particularly after it attracted royalty. Jane Austen stayed there (basing the setting of her unfinished novel *Sanderton* on it), as did Ann Radcliffe, George Eliot and, more recently, Oscar Wilde, who wrote *The Importance of Being Ernest* there (it would also get mentioned in his trial, for the relationship he formed there with the 16-year-old Alphonse Conway). W. H. Hudson, the author of *Green Mansions*, one of David's favourite books, was buried in Worthing in 1922.

According to Pick,[160] David began his next novel, *Devil's Tor*, in 1928. (Though, as he also submitted it—unsuccessfully—to Chatto and Windus in the same year,[161] and it's a long book, it seems likely he might have begun it before this. It may, though, at this stage, have merely consisted of a revision of the novel previously called *The Ancient Tragedy*; the final published version of *Devil's Tor* would go through a good deal of reworking over the next few years.) By the time of the move into Meadowbank, he had finished it and was looking for a publisher. (It seems, then, that he was no longer using Ronald Massey's services as an agent.) Around this time, E. H. Visiak, who had not been in contact with David for five years, had a meeting with the publisher Victor Gollancz, and lent him his copy of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Gollancz called David in for a meeting, and told him what "joy and terror"[162] reading the novel had given him. He asked to read *The Haunted Woman*, too. Gollancz's own recollection of the meeting was that the author of *A Voyage to Arcturus* was "a person of singular charm and gentleness", and:

> I remember only two things about him. The first is that he seemed to me far more of a Beethovenian than of a writer. The second is that he made a remark which, on the face of it, was the most outrageously arrogant I have ever heard given and yet was, in fact, the expression of a profound humility. He said, "Only a very few people will ever read

> 'Arcturus': but as long as even two or three people will listen to Beethoven, two or three people will read it."[163]

(In another letter to Visiak, Gollancz says he met David only once, but in David's own letters to Visiak there are two separate occasions when he mentions visiting the publisher, the first being this meeting on 10 September 1929, the second in September 1932, when he "dropped in on Gollancz and offered him 'Arcturus' again".[164])

After studying at Oxford and working as a teacher, Victor Gollancz (1893–1967) had joined the publishers Benn Brothers in 1921, then left to form the company that bore his own name in 1927. Early authors in his stable included Ralph Straus (who'd reviewed *Arcturus* positively in *The Sketch* in 1921), Dorothy L. Sayers, M. P. Shiel, Charles Williams, S. Fowler Wright (who'd been involved in the Birmingham shenanigans that led to David's brother's bankruptcy), and, in translation, the Austrian writer of occult fiction, Gustav Meyrink.

After sending him a copy of *The Haunted Woman*, David followed it up with the manuscript of *Devil's Tor*. Gollancz passed. (He would later say, of David, "In my view, he thought and felt and imagined superbly, but wrote abominably."[165] This is generally taken as a criticism of *Arcturus*, but seems more likely to be his reaction to *Devil's Tor*, and hence the reason he passed on it.) Nevertheless, Gollancz would be of key importance in keeping David's first two novels in print, though only, sadly, after David's death.

Another positive effect of this interaction was that David wrote to E. H. Visiak, thanking him for talking to the publisher so enthusiastically about his work. This opened up the friendship once more, this time on a more permanent footing. In his letter, David noted that Gollancz was about to publish what is today Visiak's most well-known novel, *Medusa: A Story of Mystery, and Ecstasy, & Strange Horror*. David insisted he would buy his own copy, but sent Visiak his own most recently published book (and opened his next letter with the comment, "It is most kind of you to *read* 'De Mailly', but really it was merely intended as a little token of good will",[166] perhaps indicating how little he considered it a serious work). At this point, he had just sent the *Devil's Tor* manuscript to Gollancz, and had asked the publisher

to forward it to Visiak if refused. He told Visiak to forward it to L. H. Myers once he'd read it, but Visiak asked if he could send it to a friend of his, Peter Judge, first.

Peter Leonard Judge (1908–1985) had been a pupil of Visiak's at York House School. Born in Hampstead, the son of an architect, he may have been living in Horsham, in West Sussex, around this time,[167] which would put him reasonably close to David. (And the two would soon become friends. Pick mentions him as "the dark, courteous Peter Judge", whom David referred to as "the impeccable butler".[168]) Judge would follow a career as a scenic artist and stage designer for the theatre, at one point working as costume designer at London's Windmill Theatre (ironically, during the time when it was known for presenting "tableaux vivants" of nude women—their not moving being the one thing that saved it from being obscene in the eyes of the law), and would later create an automated "toy theatre" for the Festival of Britain Travelling Exhibition, which gave 400 performances daily.[169] At one point Judge planned an exhibition of illustrations he'd created for *A Voyage to Arcturus*, though I don't know if this event, in the end, took place.[170]

David finally met Visiak in person shortly after their correspondence re-opened (perhaps while David was visiting his sister, who was now living at Queenhill Road in Croydon). Visiak recalls him being "at first formal, stiff, inhibited; but he soon relaxed, and spoke in his normal somewhat stilted manner, that of Judge when he relaxes in the 'haunted rooms' of *The Haunted Woman*."[171] Visiak would later visit the Lindsays, nicknaming Helen and Diana "Night and Day", for their contrasting shades of hair. Visiak remembers David as being "in a state of settled, and sometimes it seemed phlegmatic, good humour". He was, Visiak recalled, a man who enjoyed life—"relished his food, his drink—especially ale in an inn—and his pipe." Thinking of "the austerities in *Arcturus*", Visiak challenged him on not practising what he preached—no doubt thinking also of that letter from the start of their friendship, where Visiak had tried to rescue poetry, at least, from *Arcturus*'s dismissal of all pleasures as the deceptions of Crystalman. David's reply: "To practise what you preach is the sign of a weak mind!"[172]

But another occasion reveals a darker side to David's inner life. As Visiak relates of a night-walk the pair took in the surrounding country:

> Suddenly I was brought to a stand, arrested by the *very* strange aspect of the moon. It was at the full, bright, white, yet having a transparent, vacuous appearance, as if it itself was an orifice in space.
>
> "Oh, just look at the moon!" I exclaimed.
>
> He was already looking up at it. "White," he murmured. "White, *empty*." His face looked wild and tragic, and he cried with startling emphasis, "I ought *never* to have been born in this world!"
>
> I was amazed, but I said mechanically, "In what world, then, ought you to have been born?"
>
> "In *no* world!"[173]

Although we do not have David's own account of this incident, it does recall several moments from *A Voyage to Arcturus* where Maskull looks to the sky and experiences powerful but contradictory emotions. Seeing Arcturus through Krag's magnifying lens, for instance, Maskull's "heart swelled with grand and painful longings"[174]; witnessing the "strange blue light" of the sun Alppain, he feels "a peculiar wave of self-denial, of a disquieting nature"[175]. In particular, the moon of Tormance, Teargeld, "did not appear romantic to him, but disturbing and mystical".[176]

Visiak gave another, briefer, account of this incident in a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* on the occasion of their finally giving a positive review to *A Voyage to Arcturus* in 1963:

> One evening, during a walk in the country, he suddenly stopped, with an exclamation. The moon looked very odd. It appeared intense, abstract white. I too was affected. It seemed vacuous, with suggested desolation. But Lindsay suffered *nostalgia*, *yearning*. Of the mystic paradox, the "emptiness that is fullness, the fullness that is emptiness", he felt the former aspect.[177]

And he returned to this anecdote a third time, after the 1970 publication of *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*, to correct the *Times Literary Supplement*'s reviewer's interpretation of the event:

> Your reviewer attributes it to "depression", similar to L. H. Myers's. It was due to the abstract, essentially lonely sense of his mysticism. Ordinary, normal human nature is obscured from mysticism; Lindsay was only obscured in part, but could only approach it in a kind of dream, which might be nightmarish as in *Arcturus*, weird as in *The Haunted Woman* or terrible and austere as in *Devil's Tor*.[178]

In another, perhaps more polished, anecdote, Visiak recalls persuading David to accompany him to a soirée in London, given by "a leading society hostess", after he'd told her that David was a genius, and soon to be a celebrity. Bored, David apparently fell asleep, even when their hostess plied him with questions. When she exclaimed to Visiak that her special guest was asleep, Visiak said, "Quite the contrary. He's *concentrating*!"[179]

David's sister Margaret—presumably retired from her Post Office work by now, and living on the money she'd inherited from her aunt Mildred—was another visitor at Meadowbank. Unlike his relationship with his brother, David and Margaret got along well. She seems to have been easygoing by nature (her personal philosophy, according to Pick, was "be inert"[180]), with a strong capacity for friendship (at one point in her later life, for instance, she shared a house with two other women, the cousins Ethel Mary Dowling and Maud Evelyn Tebb). In June 1932 David took her to see Visiak and Visiak's mother, Maude.

Another visitor at Meadowbank, seemingly a mutual friend with Visiak, was a "John" who is mentioned in David's letters to Visiak as staying with them in Ferring for a while. As David doesn't gives John's surname, it's hard to know who this might have been; there's a reference to his having found himself a school, though whether this makes him a pupil or teacher isn't clear.

Aside from writing, David spent his days tending Meadowbank's flower beds—roses, pansies and lupins being his favourites—while Jacqueline worked the kitchen garden and made jam. There were frequent quarrels between the couple, with David subsequently withdrawing to his room for hours at a time. Jacqueline would tell him he was "inhuman",[181] presumably for his emotional reserve. The girls, though, seem to have remembered David as an ideal father who was quite happy to let them do whatever they wanted

while under his charge. Helen and Diana would often go bathing in the sea. Another of their interests was the theatre, and the two can be found, in local newspaper reports, taking part in a variety of school productions and extracurricular theatrical clubs.

Back in Cornwall, for instance, both had been in a "Japanese Dance" as part of an entertainment given by the pupils of Trelawn School, Newquay, with Diana one of several children singled out as being "capable little artistes".[182] In 1930, Helen played a shepherd in the St Brandan's School Christmas Story play, and in January the following year both Helen and Diana appeared in a "ballet fantasy", part of a Christmas Revue put on by the Little Worthing Players at the Pier Pavilion; both played "little nymphs". That March, Diana was one of the storytellers in a school production of "Hiawatha", and in December Helen was one of several child-conductors at a Christmas entertainment; she took on the National Anthem, a daunting task for a nine-year-old. In 1932, both girls had roles in "The Enchanted Princess"—Helen, aged nine, being "Starshine", and Diana, aged twelve, being the Fairy Queen—a play put on by the pupils of Miss Marshall's Riding School, and written by Miss Paine of Ferring.

It was presumably around this time, then, that David wrote his own "Christmas Play", which it's easy to imagine was prompted by the girls, hoping he'd be another local author to have his work put on by one of their theatrical groups. The Christmas Play, though, is evidently not a school piece: it has a small cast, each of whom has a lot of lines to learn. The cast is all female, consisting of three teenage sisters, a fairy called Emerald, plus Titania the Queen of the Fairies and a witch called Nightshade. Emerald wants to grant each of the three sisters a prince as a husband, so Titania sends her to the fearful witch, who says she will provide two princes, but for the third sister, a "man without a friend".[183] To decide who gets whom, three magical mince pies are cooked and eaten. The three sisters, perhaps, recall the three Sturt girls from *Sphinx*, but the fairy-tale virtue that wins one of them the greatest reward—the "man without a friend" being, it turns out, a king—is a non-judgemental attitude towards the witch, combined with an indifference towards fate. (This ties the play in with David's latest work, *Devil's Tor*, whose protagonists Ingrid and Saltfleet proclaim themselves wholly indifferent to what fate has in store for them. But it has its echoes with previous works,

too—for instance, in *A Voyage to Arcturus*, when Maskull says, "I feel that the only thing worth living for is to be so magnanimous that fate itself will be astonished at us", or when Spadevil recommends Tydomin "enter into divine apathy of soul".[184]) It would be intriguing to know who made up the cast in the Lindsay household—the girls would surely play two of the sisters, but who would play the third?—and did Jacqueline play Titania? Who else was brought in? Robert Barnes provided music, so perhaps the "Ena" referred to in David's letter to him of around this time took one of the roles. Perhaps the date of the play can be placed through one of its few satirical references, where it's said that "To-day men rise from naught // To be Dictators".[185] If this was referring to Hitler, it might make it very topical for the early 1930s; Mussolini, however, declared himself dictator of Italy in 1925. It's worth noting, though, that after their 1932 appearances in "The Enchanted Princess", Helen and Diana don't seem to have taken part in any more school plays (or at least aren't noted in the local press as doing so), so perhaps David's play would have been written around this time, before their interest seemed to wane. (Another possibility is that it was written at the end of 1936. A gnomic postscript in a January 1937 letter to Visiak—"The play is temporarily postponed"[186]—could refer to it. If it was written around that time, the girls would have been closer in age to the sisters they'd have played.)

After his initial attempt to get *Devil's Tor* published by Gollancz, David spent some time revising the manuscript. Writing to Visiak on 1 November 1929, he thanks him for giving the novel the only praise it has so far received, then adds that it "does, in fact, need re-writing", but "I have spent such long and weary hours over it that I suppose I am incapable of seeing it straight any longer."[187] In mid-1931, though, he had evidently reworked it and resubmitted it to Gollancz. He wrote to Visiak: "I fear he will not change his opinion of 'Devil's Tor'. Though in fact the book is wholly altered…"[188] Gollancz passed again.

Everything about *Devil's Tor* proclaims it to be a book that has *weight*, from its length, its often dense prose, its themes of fate and renunciation, its sense of ancient history bearing down on the present, the giant-sized goddess who appears in visions to several of the characters, and the central image of a massive stone atop the titular tor, blown away by an equally powerful natural or supernatural force. David referred to it as his "monster". In the same letter

to Visiak where he wrote of having resubmitted it to Gollancz, he goes on to write, "in no spirit of boasting", that "no book *anything like it* has ever seen the light of day. But it may impose too many demands on readers." It seems this is a different David Lindsay to the one who in *Sphinx* seemed to be worrying over the consequences of not staying absolutely true to his deepest vision, and who then went on to write his most uncharacteristic and commercially-minded book, *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*. It's as though, after *de Mailly*, he decided most definitely *not* to go down the commercial path any further, even if it *had* led to better reviews and publication in America. *Devil's Tor* was written with deep conviction, and an uncompromising fidelity to his own ideas. Its "demands" may even have been a necessary element, a Krag-like refusal to prettify the truth in any way. It was as though David were deliberately wrapping himself in a layer of readerly "demand", to protect himself from any chance of compromising his vision.

Perhaps something of this artistic intent—an approach encapsulated in his comment to Victor Gollancz that "very few people will ever read 'Arcturus'"—is to be found in the novel's character of Magnus Colborne, a writer of books of "abstruse theological and metaphysical problems"[189] that "few had read and none had liked",[190] who at one point says:

> There is assumed to be an intelligent public that interests itself in cosmical problems. It seems, however, that it has failed hitherto to hear of my books; at least, it has not bought them… you may conceive the small inclination I felt to go on spending myself in a vacuum.[191]

Magnus, despite presenting some of the theory behind *Devil's Tor* (for instance, his justification for a goddess-figure being more primal than a male god), is a misanthropic grump, of the sort who speaks his mind however much it might hurt others, and makes no attempt to overcome his irrational and particular dislike of certain individuals, such as his nephew Hugh. Presumably, then, he's not meant as a self-portrait of the uncompromising author—if anything, he comes across as a warning against sticking too much to one's more outré ideas, as it can lead to isolation and bitterness.

(David's friend Robert Barnes supposedly was the basis for the painter Peter Copping in the novel, but again, it seems unlikely Copping was an exact portrait of Barnes, as the characterisation, and the role he plays, are hardly flattering.)

Devil's Tor's story focuses on Ingrid Fleming, a young woman who has always had a sense that a goddess lies buried under the forbidding, head-like crag atop Devil's Tor. A series of events bring together the twin halves of a stone that, in ancient times, fell from the sky and elevated the local primitives into the next stage of their evolution. Now, the two halves of the stone, one of which had been taken half a world away to Crete and then Tibet, are brought back together, just as Ingrid is to be united with the man destined to father her child, a child who will take the human race one more step forward.

The plot is sparse, but the examination of motive, character, relationship, and the influence of history—both personal and ancient—provide the weight. It contains some of David's most moving writing, as when, for instance, Hugh Drapier, walking towards Devil's Tor and feeling he is soon to die, mentally reviews a life perhaps not lived to the full. The ideas the book addresses—"Fate made visible, the Great Mother, the mystic stones belonging to a world of other dimensions, the part of the Northern races in history, the supernatural bringing-together of a chosen pair for the uplifting of humanity, the purpose of the creation of the universes" as David himself put it in his piece on the novel for Putnam's[192]—includes one that, though part of the thinking of his time, now throws some of the book into a distinct moral shade: the amount of the day's thinking on race that backs up some of the novel's action and theory. As J. B. Pick put it: "Certain conceptions which were dangerous to his work were taking hold on him."[193] But, as so often with David's work, it's not easy to separate what the characters say from what the author believes. A little more light will be thrown on this issue in chapter 12.

As he had with Gollancz, Visiak worked to prepare the way for *Devil's Tor* with another potential publisher, sending *A Voyage to Arcturus* to Ragg of Putnam. (It seems Visiak also approached the publisher Edward Arnold around this time, in the hopes of getting *The Haunted Woman* reissued, but

this came to nothing.[194]) L. H. Myers surely had a hand in priming the pump, too, as Putnam were his publishers. Pick names the editor in question T. W. Ragg,[195] but this is most likely Thomas Murray Ragg (1897–1953), who worked as an editor and book-designer at Putnam, and was later head of Routledge, whom he joined in January 1936. (He also wrote detective thrillers as Murray Thomas.) When Ragg proved enthusiastic about *Arcturus*, he was given *The Haunted Woman*, and after this wrote to David in November 1931, requesting to see some chapters from his latest work.[196] David sent the first twenty chapters of *Devil's Tor* and waited.

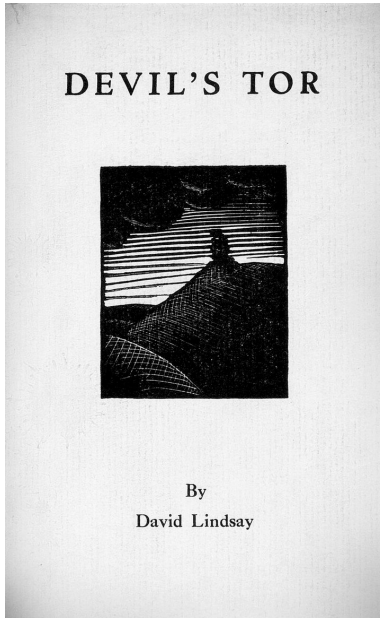
Unlike most of David's previous publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons had been around nearly a hundred years by this point (the firm having been established as Wiley & Putnam in 1838). Based in America, it was the first U.S. publishing firm to establish a London office (in 1841). In David's time its U.K. concern was run by Constant Huntington (1876–1962), who had acquired a controlling interest in the London branch of the firm and in 1930 renamed it Putnam and Company Ltd. Its authors around this time included Lord Dunsany, Erich Maria Remarque, Marie Stopes, Rudolf Steiner, fellow Colfeian Henry Williamson, and cultural commentators Desmond MacCarthy and Malcolm Muggeridge.

The acceptance came on 5 January 1932.[197] David was asked to sit for a portrait photograph, which would be reproduced in Putnam's latest catalogue. He was also asked to write something about himself (the biographical piece quoted above, in the introduction) and about the creation of the novel. Of the latter, he wrote:

> *Devil's Tor* was conceived in a spirit of music. A previous book of mine, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, was similarly generated; and the greatest compliment it has ever received was from the mouth of an artist and musician, who found its whole construction and composition essentially "musical". To the curious in such matters I should have to refer *Devil's Tor*, as to its primary origins, not to any master of prose, living or dead, but to the tremendous creator of the Ninth Symphony. The first movement of that work has generally been more or less in my head during the book's writing.[198]

He concluded, "The eye caring to discern will see… the evident traces of an astronomical parallax: by which I mean a progress of the story, not only from the first chapter to the last, but across the sky-space of thought itself."

Devil's Tor was published in April 1932.



11

Devil's Tor Reviews

1932

Something in the culture had changed since the publication of David's earlier novels. In reviews of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, *The Haunted Woman* and *Sphinx* there had always been an underlying assumption that the main function of a novel was entertainment, not, for instance, an engagement with ideas. And the fact that the reviews of the '20s were, generally, unsigned, created a feeling that they were written both by and for the average man or woman on the street. But by the early 1930s, reviews were not only sometimes signed, but many were written by established authors, who saw themselves not as entertainers but public intellectuals. Several of the reviewers of *Devil's Tor* were of this stripe, including J. B. Priestley and Rebecca West, and they engaged with David's new novel as a work of literature in the larger sense: not just an entertainment, but as a vehicle for *saying something*, a work of art that needed to be judged on its own terms. In addition, reviews were quite simply longer, allowing for a deeper examination of what a novel was doing.

The easiest explanation for this change is the emergence of Modernism. Although the key Modernist texts—the likes of Eliot's *Waste Land* (1922), Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), and Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)—were published in the same years as David's earlier novels, these texts marked themselves out as being explicitly artistic, challenging and even deliberately difficult works, intended for an elite readership who were prepared to work towards understanding them. There was no ambiguity, as there was with *A Voyage to Arcturus*, as to how seriously they were supposed to be taken. By the 1930s, the basic approach of Modernism had seeped into the wider culture, and it was generally more acceptable for a play or novel to engage with challenging ideas or take an unusual approach, while still being meant for a wider

readership.

Another factor was that the postwar euphoria of the '20s had been mellowed by dour economic and political realities. The culture, as a result, was simply more serious. David's decision to turn away from having even half an eye on pleasing a potential readership, towards writing what he felt he *had* to write, was the right decision, both for him and, it seems, for the times.

Which isn't to say *Devil's Tor* received a wholly positive response.

J. B. Priestley (1894–1984), a novelist and playwright perhaps best known today for *An Inspector Calls* (1945), began his review in *The Evening Standard* (28 April 1932, p. 7) promisingly, with a reference to David's first book:

> There is a sad lack of good fantastic fiction… I had hopes of Mr. David Lindsay, who wrote "A Voyage to Arcturus," which was published just after the war and fell flat. I had never heard of it myself until a publisher—not the book's own publisher—called my attention to it a year or two ago… "A Voyage to Arcturus," though it begins and ends indifferently, is a grand piece of wild imagining.

Ultimately, though, this was a good review for *Arcturus*, but not for *Devil's Tor*:

> Now and then there are flashes of the Arcturus quality in this massive chronicle, which deals with a supernatural attempt to impose a mystical matriarchy upon the world, but for the most part I found it woefully cumbersome, turgid and unconvincing. On the other hand, I do hope that Mr. Lindsay, who seems to write with difficulty, will not be discouraged. I suggest an immediate reprint of his "Voyage to Arcturus".

Novelist and journalist Rebecca West (1892–1983), writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (6 May, p. 7), after pointing to a couple of possible predecessors (calling *Devil's Tor* "a modern companion to Lord Lytton's 'Zanoni,' and George MacDonald's 'Lilith'") also brought up *Arcturus*, though again to *Devil's Tor*'s detriment:

> One must pronounce that Mr. Lindsay's earlier work, "A Voyage to Arcturus," was a better book than "Devil's Tor"… But all the same, the book is an excellent specimen of its kind, and the mystical portions have the virtue of sincerity, as if Mr. Lindsay had scorned to use anything to play the part of truth in his story that he did not believe might be the truth, were the universe a shade more dominated by the dusk than it is. And one feels guiltily that it is perhaps not only the slight incongruity of the discussions, but their length, that makes one object to them; yet the novelist of this type must be allowed time to weave his mysteries, to bring by his spells dusk down to earth.

The *seriousness* of David's intent were certainly being appreciated.

L. P. Hartley (1895–1972), a novelist and short-story writer often remembered today for his ghost stories—who was also, it might be noted, a close friend of L. H. Myers—wrote not one but two reviews of *Devil's Tor*. He made it plain that he did not like David's writing ("Mr David Lindsay's literary style is laboured and uncouth", in *The Sketch*), but took pains to balance this with some positives:

> What is of value in him is a complete originality of mind and great intensity of feeling. He is so different from other writers without in the least wishing to be different. He has an extraordinary sense of spiritual forces; they are perfectly real to him, and enable him to present the supernatural without self-consciousness…
>
> *The Weekend Review*, 23 April 1932

> Most writers handle the supernatural gingerly and self-consciously; Mr Lindsay takes to it like a duck to water; it is his element. And the more he asks of his imagination, the more grandiose the conceptions it flings upon the page, the more impressive does his gift become. It is an exceedingly unwieldy gift, utterly unable to produce ordinary dialogue or imitate the surface of everyday life. Mr Lindsay is like an architect who can only design a pyramid or a sky-scraper. But at its best "Devil's Tor" has moments of grandeur almost without parallel in modern fiction.
>
> *The Sketch*, 17 August 1932, p. 302

Novelist H. E. Bates (1905–1974), on the other hand, writing in *The Evening Standard* (28 April, p. 7), was wholly negative. Calling it "a prime example of verbosity" and "a heavy, woolly piece of work, full of long unnecessary essays in the supernatural, weighed down by pretensions and romantic descriptions of dark and dismal scenery, and peopled by characters who talk either like gods in ancient sagas or professors lecturing in obscure sciences", his review concluded:

> At least half of it is superfluous; there are conversations in it which by their tediousness and unnaturalness give one nightmares… Mr. Lindsay's pages are steeped in the odd and the mystical. There is, too, something of a fairy story about the lives of Helga and Ingrid and Hugh Drapier. But the simplicity and universality of it escapes me. It seems to me, on the other hand, forced and involved and most pretentious. As for explaining life, it does not even touch it.

This final sentence was a riposte to David's own idea, as put forward in his statement about *Devil's Tor*, given to Putnam's, and presumably reproduced in the novel's publicity materials:

> There are two orders of imaginative writers—those who describe the world and those who explain it. The first—by far the larger class—are the poets or poetic-minded, even though their merchandise be cynicism or sordidness: they aim only at setting familiar things in new and striking lights. But the second have the musical temper—between metaphysics and music is this inexplicable link of consanguinity. *Their* aim is the presentation of passion, emotion, and the elemental forces generally. They wish to get down to the roots of the world.[199]

Perhaps Bates felt somewhat stung by this statement, for he seems to have been far more among the "poets or poetic-minded". His most well-known novel today is *The Darling Buds of May* (1958), a book that, like *Devil's Tor*, takes place in the countryside, but which otherwise is a complete contrast, being an outright celebration of idyllic, warm, and fulfilled human lives.

Bates evidently had no need for, or feel for, the more fantastic elements in David's work, as evinced by his dismissing *Devil's Tor* for its "unnecessary essays in the supernatural"—when, as J. B Pick says, "The 'essays in the supernatural' are not 'unnecessary', they *are* the book."[200]

Another reviewer, the novelist and historian L. A. G. Strong (1896–1958)—who would go on to become director of Methuen, David's first publisher—was much more positive, if not in a wholly unqualified way:

> *Devil's Tor* begins magnificently. It is a vast, ambitious story… Mr. Lindsay is most decidedly a man to watch. He is original, he has ideas, and he can write. The first half of his book is a very considerable achievement. Unfortunately, unlike Hugh's half stone, it is better without its fellow. Mr. Lindsay's ideas are very interesting indeed, but it is fatal for a novelist to become more interested in his ideas than in his people.

Hugh I'Anson Fausset (1895–1965), a critic and biographer, perhaps best sums up the majority of the opinions presented by these "named reviewer" reviews. Writing (in *The Guardian*, 6 May, p. 7) that *Devil's Tor* "is a vast, formidable, and over-powering book", he first of all tackles the main negative point for him, the prose style:

> Mr. Lindsay is not a dexterous writer. He is often cumbrous and heavy-handed, and he handles his narrative with none of that expert economy or glancing cleverness which is so generally characteristic of modern fiction.

Added to this, "certain of his chapters… resolve themselves into lectures on mythology, archaeology, anthropology, or palaeontology", though Fausset admits these *are* "intimately related to the spiritual drama which his story unfolds". But he recognises that these criticisms are secondary to the true value of the book, which is what it was *saying*, not how it was said:

> Yet it is, in a sense, true that the length and even the stylistic

> uncouthness of the book are an intrinsic part of its whole artistic and moral size. For its scope is colossal… On the surface it has all the features of sensational fiction—forbidden Tibet, and a raid on a Buddhist monastery, a stolen talisman, the pursuit of the thief across the world, thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and a mysterious death on a mist-veiled moor. But these are only the external manifestations of a great mystery which transcends altogether any merely psychic or phenomenal tempest… Mr. Lindsay has revealed the working of magnetic and awful powers, the mystery of sacrifice and suffering, the reality and inexorability of fate, the beauty of Ingrid's perfect surrender to the overruling will and the apotheosis in which it culminates with an astonishing force and a rare visionary penetration. His book at once engrosses and exhausts us. Its vast bulk is charged throughout with an electric tension and an implacable menace. But to read it is to suffer an unforgettable experience, to be excited, appalled, and finally purged.

Fausset returned to the book in his "Glance Back Over The Year", in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (14 December, p. 6), where he described *Devil's Tor* as "a voluminous and ungainly, but spiritually exciting and illuminating story".

The Times Literary Supplement (2 June, p. 409), whose reviews remained unsigned at this point, began by detecting a "reminiscence of Wilkie Collins's moonstone, a flavour of the sinister Dr. Nikola, a dash of Mr. M. P. Shiel's apocalyptic imagination, a strain of Rider Haggard" in the novel, but nevertheless called it "a highly original feat in the realm of occult fiction":

> It is not very clear, in spite of the energy of the author's rhetoric and his capacity for evoking sombre and terrifying visions. But if as a story the book is too long and confused… a great deal of active meditation on religious and occult possibilities has clearly gone to its making; so that as an imaginative (and perhaps consciously symbolic) picture of the destiny and calling of humanity it has its own poetry and force of suggestion.

The Glasgow Herald (28 April, p. 4), in a long but unsigned review, put forward the idea that *Devil's Tor* "might be described as the scholar's thriller"—which could well be a selling point today, whether it implies a similarity to the work of Dan Brown or Umberto Eco—but goes on to say:

> …and if it fails in popularity it will be because it suffers from the failings and virtues of both scholars and thrillers. There is undoubtedly far too much indigested display of knowledge, which unduly protracts its length, a defect further increased by long-winded discussions, of trivialities...

But yet again, this is a qualified criticism:

> But the story—fantastic tale as it is—has certainly the power to thrill, and on a higher plane to inspire in one a genuine sense of awe… Up to the finding of the stones it all moves with the surest purpose; from there on both excitement and interest are dissipated and the sense of seriousness frequently lost. "Devil's Tor" is certainly not to be missed by those who love a tale of the occult.

Generally, David seemed to have received more positive reviews from north of the border, and here *The Scotsman* (5 May, p. 2) was no exception—and this includes praise of the prose style:

> Mr Lindsay's long and exceedingly able novel… [presents] the drama of gigantic imaginary forces, which the author portrays in a series of happenings beyond anything an ordinary mind can bring within the bounds of possibility… A blending of the supernatural and occult, the metaphysical and psychic, with the world of material things is arrived at in an atmosphere and with a circumstantiality that forbids ridicule. The fact that the author succeeds in arousing and keeping the reader's interest throughout a weird, sombre, and tragic tale, is due not so much to constructive skill, though that is not lacking, as to the beauty and persuasiveness with which he sets it forth. It is a rare joy to find

such consistently perfect English in a novel. Whether Mr. Lindsay will have better fortune this time than he had with *A Voyage to Arcturus*, another book of distinction, published just after the war, is perhaps doubtful, for matter and style are a bit above the heads of the multitude. But *Devil's Tor* should have a warm welcome from those discerning readers who care for originality of theme and genuine artistry in its treatment.

There were many more signed, or merely initialled, reviews—*Devil's Tor* was the most reviewed, and reviewed in-depth, of any of David's books in his lifetime—and although each varied slightly, the general tone remains the same one, of qualified praise:

> David Lindsay is not a very prolific writer, but what he gives us is well worth reading… It is a compelling story, full of mystery and weird supernatural happenings, in which the present age and that of the world's earliest days are cleverly mixed. The novel is a long one, but grips from start to finish, although those who are at all nervy would be well advised not to read it alone after twilight under the shadow of a Dartmoor Tor.
>
> *The Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 22 April, p. 7

> Readers interested in, or curious about, occult matters will find plenty of food for thought in what is not so much a novel as an allegory or parable concerning the great mother spirit of the Universe, whose worship extends far back into primeval times, and whose influence Mr. Lindsay pictures as still lingering round the lonely spaces on Dartmoor. The book, whatever its appeal to the ordinary reader, is distinctly out of the common, both in manner and matter.
>
> *The Western Morning News*, 2 May, p. 2

> There is some excellent writing in it, but many passages smell very decidedly of the lamp, and the episode of the earthquake which destroyed the mysterious underground shrine of the "Great Mother" cult is forced and unconvincing. The denouement is more effective.

The Northern Whig, 4 May, p. 9

> Its length—it runs into just on 500 closely printed pages—is alone likely to prove forbidding to the average novel reader, who prefers his fiction in smaller doses. Moreover, its occultism, of which there is much, will be caviare to the general. The eerie happenings on the lonely Devil's Tor in Devon, as Lindsay deals with them, will have a tremendous significance for the characters in the story, every chapter of which is a study of life by a subtle intelligence. With rare artistic skill the author deals with the reactions and interactions of a strange and varied group of characters.
>
> *The West Australian*, 28 May, p. 4

> There are grandeur and dignity about "Devil's Tor." It is massive for a present-day novel, for it runs to near five hundred closely-printed pages. Much study and thought of life and character have gone to the making of it, and the story, which is given as a serious explanation of life, is told in attractive language… The story develops slowly which, perhaps, is only natural in such a book, but the reader is apt at times to get wearied over some of the long-winded discussions of one or two of the characters.
>
> *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 25 May, p. 2

> Tinged with the supernatural, the strange events in the seclusion of Devil's Tor are powerfully interpreted. This is a great book.
>
> *The Musselburgh News*, 10 June, p. 3

And, as with *The Haunted Woman*, *Devil's Tor* was also reviewed in a specialist journal coming from a slightly different angle than the newspapers, *The Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science* (October 1932, p. 250):

> The trances, visions and clairvoyance which are experienced by many who come near the spot [of the Tor], and the denouement—rather over-elaborated—provide an interesting story to those who are

interested in the theories that ancient rituals and passionate experiences leave their mark on the surrounding earth, and that these can be evoked at any following period when the right sensitive appears.

To end this look at the reactions to *Devil's Tor*, there is this article, presented here in full, that appeared in David's local paper, *The Worthing Herald* (14 May 1932, p. 10, signed Will O'Worthing), complete with a reproduction of the author's photo that appeared in the Putnam's catalogue—meaning David could well have been recognised by his fellow residents after this:

A Ferring Author.

I must confess that before receiving a copy of Mr David Lindsay's new novel, "Devil's Tor" (Putnam, 7s. 6d., pp. 487), I had never heard of this Sussex author who lives almost within the borough of Worthing—at Meadow Bank, Sea-lane, Ferring. Doubtless this is unpardonable ignorance, but if there are any others to whom, like me, Mr Lindsay is but a name, I cannot help feeling that the fault lies in some measure with Mr Lindsay himself. For it was in 1926 that he last published a book, and as far back as 1920 that his "A Voyage to Arcturus" made an appearance. From what I gather this was his finest work. I have not read it, so cannot, if I would, compare it with

"Devil's Tor."

Let me say at once that "Devil's Tor" is a novel which demands attention. It is not light reading, rather can it be classed as serious reading; it is a long book (437 pages); it is a book which treats, one might almost say, fully with half-a-dozen totally different and obtuse subjects.

The Great Mother.

In the brief space at my disposal I cannot even attempt to outline the plot. It is a story of the cult of the Great Mother, of supernatural, occult, psychic happenings on "Devil's Tor," a landmark in Devon. The characters see actual happenings of prehistoric times, an ancient tomb is revealed and the Tomb's Spirit appears. She was not born on earth but descended from space. In what shape was she? In the beginning, as a pillar of light. The Great Mother. For the rest, reader—and there is much that is even more astounding—you must read the book. It is unexplainable here in few words.

A Book Worth Reading.

Mr Lindsay crowds his book with incident and colour. Perhaps he makes one mistake. One is apt to become a little weary of the habit of self analysis to which each and all of his characters are prone. That is, I suppose, the new style with many modern authors, but psychology, and a laborious study of each action and thought and reaction of an individual, the exposing of his minutest intention, can be made to become little short of wearisome. Maybe it is that I am a simple soul who cannot stand more than a moderate dose of psychological interpretation. Certainly it nearly proved too much for me when Mr Lindsay occupied 22 pages with explaining the thoughts of four characters in a pause of a few moments in a general conversation.

But perhaps I have overstressed this matter so that any reading this who have not read "Devil's Tor" will decide it is dull. They will be

foolish if they come to such a conclusion. I can say this frankly—I have not read a more original novel for a very long time. Mr Lindsay, if he has not already done so, will make a name for himself before very long.

12

The Witch

1932–1938

David wrote to Putnam's a few months after the publication of *Devil's Tor*, suggesting a reprint of *A Voyage to Arcturus*.[201] This novel had been mentioned favourably in several reviews of *Devil's Tor*, which was sure to pique interest. By this point, he was dealing not with Ragg but Constant Huntington (1876–1962). Boston-born and Harvard-educated, Huntington had joined Putnam in 1902, and been made head of their London offices in 1906. He was known for "adopting authors in whom he took a passionate interest and nursing their careers with integrity and almost startling enthusiasm".[202] His reply, though, was disappointing. Despite "a very special effort" to promote *Devil's Tor*, it hadn't sold as well as hoped—650 copies by June 1932—and although he believed it had made "a real impression" and would go on selling, he also knew it would be "fatal… to present another book of yours to the booksellers this year".[203] Back in April, Huntington had written to David that "In my belief, *Devil's Tor* is a classic and has a long life before it", but by June he was writing that "even the friendliest critics suggest that your gifts have not been utilised to the best advantage".[204] David evidently wrote again on the same subject several months later, for in September Huntington wrote once more to the same effect: now was not the time.

What was involved in the "very special effort" Putnam's made in promoting *Devil's Tor*? From the number (and length) of reviews alone, it's evident a sizeable batch of promotional copies had been sent out. David's portrait and, presumably, his short piece on the writing of the novel, had been featured in Putnam's catalogue (an impressive item itself, being printed on high quality art paper[205]). Putnam's had also enlisted one of their authors,

the respected literary critic Desmond MacCarthy (1877–1952), to promote David's novel,[206] presumably by word of mouth and personal contacts within the literary world. MacCarthy had been a journalist since the early years of the twentieth century, when he'd also been associated with the Bloomsbury Group. He'd been made drama critic at *The New Statesman* in 1917, and its literary editor in 1920, but by 1928 had moved on to create his own journal, *Life and Letters*. MacCarthy, apparently, already admired *A Voyage to Arcturus*, but I have not been able to find anything he actually wrote on David's work, except for a quote in a review of *Devil's Tor*, presumably from the publicity materials sent out with the novel:

> Of the reading of this work of fiction [i.e., *Arcturus*] Desmond MacCarthy said it was "a great experience," while another competent critic, L. H. Myers, said, also referring to "A Voyage to Arcturus," that he yielded to no one in his admiration of Lindsay's work.
>
> *The West Australian*, 23 May 1932, p. 4

By Autumn of the following year, the remaining unsold copies of *Devil's Tor* were repackaged as a cheap edition, selling for 3s 6d, less than half the initial price of 7s 6d. If David required any more depressing news, that October his former literary agent Ronald Massey shot himself in the head on Sheets Heath, near his home at Brookwood in Surrey, having suffered from increasing depressions, headaches, and lack of sleep. (His agency continued to operate, however, until 1946.)

Characteristically, David had begun work on his next novel as soon as *Devil's Tor* was placed with Putnam. He wrote to his new publishers about his intentions:

> Between the philosophies of *Arcturus* and *Devil's Tor* there seems to be a chasm of contradiction. As both books were sincerely and independently written, and were long matured, no doubt the contradiction is more apparent than real; and it seems to me that a larger synthesis can be found, to include both philosophies. But in

> that case, a new and higher truth should emerge; and this is what I am after.[207]

E. H. Visiak provides a glimpse of David's spartan writing set-up at this time, as he embarked on what was to be his final project, *The Witch*:

> A wild eldritch-looking effigy in plaster hung on the boarded walls of his study, which were otherwise bare… Nothing else was in the room except his typewriter on a small table in front of the Witch.[208]

The "wild eldritch-looking effigy" had been created specifically for David by Robert Barnes, who himself described it being "in neo-classical style",[209] which implies something more sedate than Visiak's description.

In May 1933, David wrote to Visiak, of this new novel: "I am struggling through it in infinite darkness. It will be the most instinctive of all my books".[210] He added that the book would be "more 'mystical' (less cosmic) than 'Devil's Tor'"—perhaps because while *Devil's Tor*'s supernatural forces had come from the stars, *The Witch* was delving into the realms beyond our earthly existence entirely. (Apparently, he several times emphatically told Robert Barnes "I am not a mystic."[211] This might, of course, be exactly what a mystic *would* say. But David's seems to have seen the term as an indication of retreat from the world, if the subterranean "land of mystics" Threal in *A Voyage to Arcturus* is anything to go by: its contemplative denizen Corpang, jolted out of the falseness of his beliefs by Maskull, returns to the outside world where he is likened to "a bewildered toad dragged up out of a dark hole".[212])

In October, writing to Visiak again, he returns to the difficulty he's having in crafting the book:

> I am still struggling along up the chimney with my 'Witch'… nothing in it will catch fire from fire, but every sentence nearly must be struck out from nothing, afresh…[213]

It wasn't until December 1934 he could write that it was "done at last",[214]

though by this point it had already been turned down by Gollancz. Does this mean it had also already been turned down by Putnam's, which he presumably would have tried first, they being his existing publisher? Either way, his response was to return to the manuscript and rewrite it. By December the following year, *The Witch* was "still being infinitely worked upon";[215] by 30 March 1936, he was hoping it would be done that week; by June the same year, he tells Visiak:

> I work daily on 'The Witch', but it is writing *me*, not I, *it*. When I started it I had certainly no idea where it would lead me.[216]

The protagonist of *The Witch* is Ragnar Pole, a writer of "major works of literary imagination"[217] who, like Magnus Colborne of *Devil's Tor*, is little-read: "Some devil was in it that he should write his books, read by few, comprehended by fewer, wanted by none!"[218] Unlike David himself, though, Ragnar is wealthy enough for this not to be a concern. He is even asked by a friend, Felix, if he'll financially support a literary journal, *Memnon*, whose ideal of literature could perhaps be David's own:

> …a true book, being quickened by the ray of pure intelligence in the reader, must display its authenticity by the repeated sounding within the soul of a sudden note, like sharp music. And such books, that need not be the best written, or the most immediate transcript of actual life, were those which could permanently expand and ennoble the spirit of man, whereas the other sort were like a cargo of corpses.[219]

(It's interesting to compare this with the more negative view of art from *The Violet Apple*, quoted on p. 104.)

Ragnar's concerns, however, are rather more unworldly. He is drawn towards encounters with two figures—a man, Bluewright, and a woman, Urda Noett—whom he initially sees as apparitions at a friend's party. He then receives a letter from Bluewright, about a recurring dream of an empty house that has echoes in Ragnar's own writings. Bluewright asks Ragnar to locate

that house. Urda Noett, meanwhile, proves to be one of a trio of women associated with music who are also witches—not the cauldron-stirring figures of folklore, but wise women linked to a deep and mystical knowledge of other realities. Throughout the initial chapters, Ragnar meets with a number of people who all seem to be either ending or beginning new stages in their lives, and there's a feeling that he, and perhaps all the characters in the novel, are drifting through the world somewhat self-absorbed and disconnected from one another, until he meets with a young woman, Faustine, who is intent on protecting him from what she sees as the potentially dangerous influence of Urda. Ragnar seems to slip easily into a slightly different reality, seeing apparitions, even entering an entire village that may not exist. Driving through the Sussex landscape, he feels an almost hallucinogenic transformation of the world around him into "dreaming shifting halls of crystal; each new stretch of country… filled by shapes that seemed to come forward in strange silent animation".[220] Finally, he arrives at the house Bluewright wrote of, where he is to meet Urda Noett. (A house that Ragnar's brother describes as being "in the style of about 1876"[221]—oddly specific for an architectural style, with a date that is, nevertheless, David's own birth year, as though the house were, in some way, the author, its mystic interior his own.) Here it is as though the third of the "hidden rooms" in *The Haunted Woman* has spread to the entire house: as soon as he enters the front door, he's in an external landscape, though one infused with the supernatural. And here Urda proceeds to instruct him in what will happen to the soul after death: its entire progress through multiple worlds, or stages, or "Musics"—worlds of pain, the pain of disconnection and loneliness, though ultimately leading to a reunion with the source of it all, known as the Ancient.

The Witch is a deeply mature work, examining the subtle relationships between its many characters, and Ragnar's meditations on the nature of his experiences. It is also a book haunted by a profound and spiritual sense of loneliness, and a sense of far greater realities just beyond our own. In some ways, it's like the work of the occult novelist Gustav Meyrink (author of *The Golem*, and other books), in that it's about explicitly supernatural characters and events conspiring to lead the main character through an initiation into mysteries of an entirely otherworldly nature, but it does without Meyrink's reliance on traditional occult symbols and figures. David has, in *The Witch*,

brought the double worlds of his former novels that much closer together, as though the entire Sussex landscape were interwoven with the sort of reality only perceived with difficulty in the likes of *The Haunted Woman*, *Sphinx* and *Devil's Tor*.

Ultimately, though, this version of David's final novel would never be completed. The manuscript, which still exists, has a final chapter, but the character names are different from the bulk of the narrative ("Ulline" for Urda, "Philip" for Ragnar, "Lucy" for Faustine), meaning this is an earlier ending that David had, presumably, yet to rewrite. Enough exists, though, for it to produce a novel readable by those who are interested in David's work, and to know what he intended.

In May 1933—when David wrote to Visiak that Gollancz had rejected *The Witch* in its first state—the Lindsays were having a "new small wing" added to their house, and, coincidentally, were also storing some of David's sister's furniture, as she was presumably in the midst of a move.

In November of that year, David's sister Margaret and Jacqueline went on a trip together to the island of Madeira. David's cousin Edith Marian Joyce had married a hotelier, Eugene Ernest Jones, back in 1903, who owned and ran the island's Hotel Bella Vista. Shortly after that wedding, all three of the Bellamy sisters—Edith's mother Marianne Joyce, Mildred Couchman, and David's mother Bessy—along with Margaret had gone to visit the newlyweds. Since then, Eugene and Edith had made many trips back to England, and Margaret had made several over there. Why Jacqueline accompanied her this time, and David didn't (presumably in part because the girls would still have been at school), we can't know, but there is the possibility, in both this trip and the two she made to New York, that the couple were taking a break from one another. Jacqueline returned one month later, on 18 December; Margaret would stay until March the following year. (Cousin Edith would later stay at Meadowbank in November 1935, before returning to Madeira, accompanied by Margaret, who was off for another five-month stay, evidently enjoying her retirement.)

David continued to meet with, and occasionally write to, both Robert Barnes and E. H. Visiak. In one letter from around this time, David thanks

Barnes for the gift of some William Blake prints. (As the letter is in March, presumably this was a birthday present.) In this letter David says there must be some similarity between himself and Blake, "since so many people insist on it", but that he has never been able to connect with Blake's work ("it never approaches me as if from my own very self"[222]) as he does with Beethoven's. From Visiak he received a different gift, a copy of a book about the Roman dictator Sulla, whose bust David mentions in *Devil's Tor* when describing the character Saltfleet. This book was most likely *Sulla The Fortunate, The Great Dictator* by G. P. Baker, published in 1927, which has a photograph of a bust of Sulla from the Museum of Archaeology in Venice as its frontispiece (although it does not seem to be universally agreed as being Sulla). Interestingly, a letter David sent to Visiak in March 1936 mentions they are "expecting the visit of a friend, an artist and musician",[223] who is evidently Robert Barnes. This can only mean Visiak and Barnes had not met, at least up to this point, and perhaps never did. From the tone of the letters he wrote to both, it does seem David was closer to Barnes, if only because they shared a deep love of music.

In August 1935, Diana (now aged sixteen) is noted as having passed her London General School exams at Worthing High School for Girls. She evidently continued her education there as, in July the following year, she's listed as passing "with credit" her exams in "extra subjects"[224]—presumably those not included in the basic educational requirements of the day. David no doubt encouraged the girls to take up the educational opportunities he was denied.

It's from around this time that an anecdote relating to one of David's daughters—most likely Diana—seems to date. One of the girls went on a school trip to Germany, and returned with a plastic soldier as a souvenir. As soon as he saw it, David was disgusted, associating it with the increasing sabre-rattling coming from Hitler's regime. (Earlier, in his "Sketch Notes", we find such comments as "nationalities, and the patriotism that attends nationalities, are inconsistent with true mental freedom and progress",[225] and—particularly relevant to the Nazi's ideas of racial purity—"The races of mankind are the backwaters of the great vital torrent; the main stream is to be looked for in the nation with the most varied assortment of individuals."[226]) David threw the plastic soldier on the fire, where it burned with a foul smell,

and David, in Sellin's words, proclaimed this "stench and treachery were completely characteristic of Nazism"; Sellin goes on to note that David "found Hitler's pretensions ridiculous, and used to say that he did not know what was meant by the Aryan race"[227]—a comment worth noting, along with the two "Sketch Notes" quoted above, in light of *Devil's Tor*'s use of so much of the day's racial "science" by two of its characters, the misanthropic Uncle Magnus, and the ruthless academic Arsinal. How much do these two characters represent his own views, or was David, as he did so often in *Arcturus*, letting his characters speak freely and leaving them to be judged by the reader?

It may seem strange to think of children from a school in Worthing going on a trip to the increasingly fascistic and belligerent Germany, but at the time there were a number of efforts being made, on both sides, to try to prevent the horrors of another Great War by strengthening the two nations' cultural ties. Worthing, for instance, had German schoolchildren over to stay, so that they could make friends with their English counterparts. In August 1937, girls from the Worthing High School for Girls's senior choir—aged fifteen to eighteen—went on a three-week tour of twelve towns in Germany, including Weimar, Jena, Leipzig and Bonn, thanks to an organisation called the Anglo-German Academic Bureau, presumably as another attempt to forge cultural bonds.[228] David's elder daughter, Diana, would have been nearly eighteen at the time (Helen was fourteen), making her an ideal candidate. (A similar trip had taken place in 1935, when Diana would have been sixteen, so this is another possible date for the soldier anecdote.) In truth—and this may explain how Diana returned from her trip carrying a piece of Nazi propaganda—the Anglo-German Academic Bureau was a Nazi-funded organisation, its purported intent to spread friendship between nations in fact a cover for proselytising to British youth. David, at least, saw through it.

But he couldn't have helped being aware of the dangers of fascism, and not just in Germany. In 1933, politician Oswald Moseley renamed his "New Party" the British Union of Fascists, and one of Worthing's local councillors, Charles Bentick Budd, announced he was a member. He was re-elected to his council post that same year, making Worthing the first town in England to have an avowedly Fascist councillor. He duly turned up to County Council meetings in his Fascist uniform, until they passed a rule against the wearing

of uniforms at such meetings. Thanks to Budd, though, Worthing hosted several public meetings and activities of the BUF, such as handing out leaflets to children at school gates, including the Worthing High School for Girls, which Diana and Helen attended.

This is not to say that the residents of Worthing merely accepted all of this. A significant anti-fascist movement actively protested at every stage, leading to an infamous confrontation on 9 October 1934, when Oswald Moseley gave a speech at Worthing's pier. The speech itself was interrupted by the chants, shouts and fireworks released by around two thousand protestors. Afterwards, when the Fascists attempted to leave, fights broke out. It turned into a running battle, known later as the Battle of South Street. (South Street is where Isbel Loment meets Henry Judge at one point in *The Haunted Woman*.)

Fascism, then, wasn't just an item of international news for David, but a cause of major disruption on his own doorstep, and a real threat.

That 1937 trip to Germany would probably have been the last the school would arrange. The following month, preparations for war began in earnest, with the people of Worthing—and, presumably, neighbouring Ferring—being fitted with emergency gas masks for use if war broke out. Worthing's Old Town Hall had already been prepared for use as an emergency hospital. The following year, public bomb shelters were built, and people were instructed in how to build their own in their backyards. Worthing was near to several aerodromes, as well as only five minutes' flight from the Naval base at Portsmouth, and so was a likely target—or at least on the flight path—for bombers. It must have seemed that, just as David, in *The Witch*, was transforming the Sussex countryside into a spiritually-infused landscape pregnant with a sense of other worlds and deeper truths, the real thing was being transformed into a potential battleground.

In July 1938, the Lindsays' younger daughter Helen passed her exams. Part of the reason for the family moving to Ferring, the girls' education, had been fulfilled. David and Jacqueline were experiencing financial troubles. Barnes relates a story of one night going into the garden at Meadowbank to find David digging up wooden blocks from the path to use as firewood.[229] He had, Barnes says, a certain equanimity about the situation, but nevertheless something needed to done.

In the end, it was Jacqueline who did it. Now the girls were educated, they were free to move once more. Also, Jacqueline felt lonely in Ferring and wanted more people about her. She had the idea of running a boarding house, either for young women visiting from the continent, or convalescents taking the sea air. David was against the plan, but, according to Pick,[230] Jacqueline went ahead and got a loan anyway. How much Jacqueline went behind David's back in doing this is difficult to say—at the time, a married woman would be highly unlikely to get a loan without her husband's approval, so it may not have been quite as dramatic as that. Nevertheless, David was hurt. Supposedly, he did not speak to Jacqueline, or she to him, for days.

But the move was made—13 miles eastward along the Sussex coast to Hove.

13

Hove

1938–1945

Built in the early years of the twentieth century, 62 Pembroke Crescent is a three-storey house on a corner plot at the crossroads with Pembroke Avenue. It is half a mile from the seafront, only a little further from Hove railway station (which Isbel Loment uses in *The Haunted Woman* to visit Henry Judge in Worthing), and just over half an hour's walk from Brighton's West Pier, making it ideal as a boarding house for the quieter sort of holidaymaker. David, supposedly, did not like the idea of being so close to such a busy resort as Brighton, but the house is in a residential area, and far enough away that it wouldn't have been bothered by holiday crowds.

At first, the boarding house attracted French students (to whom David refused to speak anything but English, as that was what they were there to learn), though in the 1939 Register (a UK-wide census taken shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War), the occupants of the house seem to be British holidaymakers. As well as David, Jacqueline, Diana and Helen—both still noted as being students, while David is listed as an "Author (Imaginative)"—there was a secretary, a filing clerk, a mailing clerk, and a telephone operator and his wife staying at the house.

One visitor around this time was the young Kenneth Gunnell (1918–2001), who would later go on to translate Sellin's *Life & Works of David Lindsay* from the French. Gunnell came to the house through knowing Diana and Helen (through a French student named Jacqueline, appropriately). In his translator's foreword to Sellin's book, Gunnell describes David as "a most withdrawn and complex character" with a "dry, abstract wit".[231] Knowing his interest in chess, Gunnell played a few games with him, though found his play "no more than that of a very average club player";[232] he decided to let

David win a game, but David saw through the ruse. Gunnell relates an anecdote about David once falling into a deep conversation ("about metaphysics") with a lady in her seventies. The room being crowded, the two ended up sharing a single chair. So deeply engaged was David that, even when the room cleared, he and the lady remained squeezed onto the same seat. Gunnell also mentions a paying guest from around that time, the American economist Leo Huberman (1903–1968), author of *Man's Worldly Goods: The Story of the Wealth of Nations* (1936), and later a founding editor of the socialist periodical *The Monthly Review*.

This would all change with the outbreak of the Second World War. Just like Worthing, Brighton and Hove were deep into preparations for a coming conflict even by the time the Lindsays moved there. In 1938, searchlights for air defence had been placed around the towns, and sandbags and trenches had been used to create bomb shelters. First-aid posts were established, and a Government pamphlet, *The Protection of Your Home Against Air Raids*, was distributed to every residence in the country. Air raid sirens were installed, and in 1939 civil defence exercises were carried out, including trial blackouts. (Full blackouts would be imposed from 1 September, two days before war was actually declared.) September also saw over 8,000 schoolchildren and their teachers evacuated from London into Brighton and its environs, merely the first batch of what would eventually be 30,000. Brighton was one of the largest evacuation areas in the country.

The Lindsays don't seem to have been expected to take in any of the evacuees, perhaps because their boarding house had been chosen to billet Naval officers. David was, at first, perturbed by the idea of so many young men filling up his home when he had two daughters of marriageable age (by the end of the war, over six hundred officers had stayed at the Lindsay establishment), but he got on well with these new boarders. Some proved to be musical, and would play the piano for him—one played particularly to David's liking, with David later writing that he'd had something of the spirit of Beethoven in him.[233]

Which isn't to say David in any way took to the war. Sensitive, introspective people like David and his friend L. H. Myers—both already deeply engaged with their own inner tussles about life—couldn't help but find in the mounting catastrophe a confirmation of their worst beliefs about

the world. David seems to have felt that, with the Second World War, European culture had come to an end. His sister Margaret later reported that he couldn't write at all during these years of international conflict.

Not all the news was bad, though. On 29 June 1940, Diana married Harold Gordon Moon, a 23-year-old dental surgeon (at the time, a lieutenant in the Army Dental Corps). The marriage took place in Hereford, where Harold was posted. (Diana's address on the marriage certificate is Bainbridge House in Seaford, a YWCA holiday home twenty miles or so eastwards along the coast from Hove, so she had evidently left home, even if only temporarily. She may have been both living and working there, as at this time Bainbridge House was being used as a place to train female Czechoslovakian refugees for domestic service.)

Barely two weeks later, early in the morning of 15 July, in the first significant air-attack on the area (two bombs had been dropped on West Hove Golf Course on 30 June, but they'd harmed no one), nine 50kg bombs fell on Pembroke Crescent. A lone Dornier bomber dropped two loads totalling sixteen bombs in all, on two towns on the South Coast (the papers do not name exact locations, in case it helped the enemy). Four people were killed in total, including a postman cycling to work. The first set of bombs shattered nearly every pane of glass within six streets of where they fell, including shops and pubs. The second load—described as falling on a "residential area",[234] which is evidently Pembroke Crescent—mostly fell in gardens or in the road. One house's roof was "lifted". David was, apparently, taking his morning cold bath at the time, and, depending on the account, either the roof of the bathroom collapsed on him, or the glass of the bathroom window shattered, and he was seriously cut. This incident, though five years before his death, is presented by both Sellin and Pick as the start of his decline. Sellin says David was suffering from anaemia anyway, and was generally run down by the hardships of his life and the poor quality of food available during the war.[235] There was also, shortly after this, an undated incident where David was hit by a child riding a bicycle, leading to more loss of blood.

October the following year, 1941, saw the birth of David's first grandchild, Andrew David Moon. (The father's address on the birth certificate is 62 Pembroke Crescent; evidently Diana and Harold had come to stay. Perhaps

this was due to Harold—now a captain—still being in the army at the time.) A second grandchild followed on 17 June 1944: Alexander Francis Moon, born in a hospital in Crickhowell in Wales, by which time the couple had their own home in Abergavenny.

At some point between 1940 and the first half of 1944, Visiak and his mother moved to Hove, at first living at 21 Holland Road, about a mile from David. Until records can be found to confirm exactly when the move occurred, my feeling is it was closer to 1944 than 1940, as it seems that David felt increasingly cut-off from the sort of sympathetic company he needed, which might not have been the case if he'd had a friend close by. On the other hand, although Visiak was there towards the end, this did not seem to have helped, as will be seen.

David had already said to Jacqueline that he would not be seeing L. H. Myers anymore. At their last meeting, the wealthy author had been depressed, and the atmosphere between the two, Pick says, had been "stifling".[236] Around this time, Myers cut himself off from many of his friends—the wealthier ones, at least—as part of his struggle with ideas about social inequality. A number of factors began to weigh on him, including his disillusionment with the political hopes he'd once pinned on post-revolutionary Russia (quickly proving, under Stalin, to be a dictatorship as bad a Germany under Hitler) but he also had fears about his health (he had an upcoming prostate operation, but had convinced himself he had cancer), a despondency about the state of the world, and a long-term acceptance of the idea of suicide. On 7 April 1944 he took an overdose of Veronal tablets, and died at his home in Marlow-on-Thames.

A few months after this, on 6 August 1944, David wrote to Robert Barnes, and it's evident from the letter that the two had not been in contact for some time. (Margaret Lindsay would later mention a quarrel that had arisen between them, though whether that was before this letter or after, it's hard to tell.) David opens the letter by mentioning a man named Liddiard who had written to him, evidently having been given David's address by Barnes. This was Norman George Liddiard (1913–1974), ordained a Methodist Minister in 1941, but who, after working in factories during the war, had asked to be released from the role. (Shortly after the end of the war, he'd be taken on as Public Relations Officer by Swindon Town Council, and would remain in

similar roles for most of his life.)

In the letter to Barnes, David also mentions that Diana was now married with two babies and Helen was serving in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in London, but that the Naval officers were now gone. With other wartime restrictions on travel still in place—and such holiday attractions as the beach still closed to the public—this would have meant there were no paying guests, and he was in need of money. David asked, frankly, for a loan of £50. It seems, though, that Barnes either couldn't or wouldn't oblige.

David's sister Margaret—who had been living in nearby Ovingdean with two female friends, but would move to Cornwall during the period of David's final months—describes her brother as being "music starved"[237] at the time. The radio which Barnes had bought for the Lindsays was broken, and needed expensive American parts. Into this situation came a couple of, presumably, paying guests, a Lieutenant Commander from Torquay and his wife. The wife was a talented pianist, and she would play Beethoven for David. She and David seemed to get close, though how much and in what way is impossible to tell. But when the couple left, the wife continued to write to David, who was now picking up his mail from the Post Office rather than having it delivered—a sign, surely, that he didn't want Jacqueline to know what was going on. On V. E. Day, 8 May 1945, though, Jacqueline intercepted a letter from this woman to David, which made it clear there were plans for him to move in with her and her husband. Confronted about it, David locked himself in his room at the top of the house and refused to come out. This state of affairs continued for almost two months. Margaret surmised he rose early, got himself some tea and had a bath, then retreated again each morning. He didn't seem to be eating.

After a week of this, Margaret convinced him to have a meal, but it was found that his gums were inflamed, and because of the pain he would only have a broth of Bovril. He refused, initially, to see a doctor. Helen was back home for a while, but she would soon be sent overseas to Algiers. Visiak and his mother visited, but David put on a convincing front, and Visiak (Margaret writes) "couldn't see much wrong with him & stayed talking I suppose all about his own affairs".[238] By June, David seemed, according to his sister, "not exactly dead but the next thing to it", and was still refusing to speak to his wife. On top of all this, the owner of 62 Pembroke Crescent—

the Lindsays evidently had not bought the house but leased it—wanted it back, and there was £80 to pay on the rates.

Finally, on 9 July, David was persuaded to let a doctor in. He was sent immediately to Southlands Hospital in Shoreham, taken there by Diana. The family expected him to start making a recovery, but the infection to his jaw had turned septic. A week later, on Monday 16 July, he died, the cause recorded as "carcinoma of the mouth, with gangrene of lower lip" and "haemorrhage due to erosion of vessels". He was sixty nine years old.

On David's admission to the hospital, the doctor had asked a peculiar question. Seeing the state of the patient's jaw, he asked if David had ever been part of the wool trade. He seems to have suspected a condition known as "Woolsorter's disease", a form of anthrax which workers could catch from untreated wool. There is, though, another way that anthrax could have affected David's jaw. Although it was rare, the disease could come from cutting one's gums on the cheap sort of toothbrush to be found in the likes of Woolworths, which were made, at the time, with animal bristles.[239] Whatever the cause, though, it seems certain that a fatalistic self-neglect was a major cause of David's final decline.

He was buried without a headstone at the small, quiet Mill Lane Cemetery in Shoreham[240] on 19 July 1945. The only attendees at the funeral were his wife Jacqueline, his sister Margaret, and his eldest daughter Diana—eerily like the three women of his final novel, *The Witch*, who guided the protagonist Ragnar Pole towards a knowledge of what happens to the soul after death. Ragnar Pole returned from the experience, David of course did not.

14

Postscripts

1945–

After David's death, Jacqueline sold the publishing rights to *A Voyage to Arcturus* and, later, *The Haunted Woman*, to Victor Gollancz.[241] A short piece in the 8 March 1946 issue of *John O'London's Weekly* (published only five days after what would have been David's seventieth birthday), which mentions the upcoming reissue of *Arcturus*, quotes her as saying "My husband was a very sincere writer, and everything he wrote was coloured by his conviction that he had a message for humanity."[242] (Which is perhaps captured in one of his "Sketch Notes": "To attain the sublime oneself, and bring it within the grasp of others, this is the grandest of all ambitions."[243]) Later, she corresponded with J. B. Pick, providing him with biographical information about David.

By 1952, she had moved to Seaford, 14 miles eastward along the coast, living at Woodlands Cottage on Alfriston Road until 1965, then moving to a seafront flat at 31 Esplanade. She remained there until her death on 17 December 1966.

Both of David's daughters would live into the twenty-first century. Diana and Harold had two more children—a daughter and a third son—and would move to Sutton Coldfield near Birmingham (and only 40 miles or so from Leamington Spa, where David's mother had been born). Diana died in 2003. Helen married and became Helen Baz, having a daughter and a son. She lived in London, and died in 2012.

David's sister Margaret had just moved to Cornwall at the time of his death, living in the house of a friend from her Post Office days. Later, she would move to Sutton Coldfield, where she would be close to her niece Diana,

dying there on 30 July 1965.

E. H. Visiak continued to live in Hove for the rest of his life, mostly in a flat in Adelaide Crescent. His mother, with whom he had lived all his life, died in 1952, and in 1958 he was awarded a civil list pension, after a petition by various poet- and writer-friends, largely on account of his scholarly work on Milton. (He had edited the Nonesuch Press *Complete Poetry & Selected Prose* of Milton, published in 1938, and two critical studies on him, *Milton Agonistes: A Metaphysical Criticism* in 1922, and *The Portent of Milton: Some Aspects of His Genius* in 1958. He also wrote a book on Conrad, *The Mirror of Conrad*, which came out in 1955.)

When Gollancz's 1946 reissue of *A Voyage to Arcturus* was published, it included Visiak's essay "The Arcturan Shadow", which had first appeared in *Notes & Queries* on 30 March 1940. (David had already written to Visiak that, should *Arcturus* ever be reissued, he wanted him to write an introduction.) Visiak would also provide an essay on the book for *The Radio Times* when the novel was adapted for the radio in 1956.

Towards the end of his life, Visiak had a brief literary resurgence, publishing his memoir *Life's Morning Hour* in 1968. By this point he had entered into a correspondence with the writer Colin Wilson, who—largely to save Visiak from boredom—suggested they collaborate on a biography of David, a project that would eventually bring in J. B. Pick and be published as *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*, in 1970. (For more on this, see the next chapter.)

Visiak died at the age of ninety four, "peacefully, after a long illness bravely borne",[244] at the Lucerne Rest and Convalescent Home on 23 Pembroke Avenue in Hove, just a little way from where David had lived.

In 1938, Robert Barnes married Joy Dennington Harvey Shead, and the couple had two sons. Sadly, the marriage didn't seem to have lasted. After working as an artist and art-teacher, Barnes left the art-world in the 1950s, moving to Bridgnorth in Shropshire, where he became a draughtsman for an engineering firm.

In the 1960s he moved to Japan, remarried, and restarted his art career

("his visionary paintings were received with enthusiasm"[245] in Japan), but would return to England again, dying on his birthday, 15 July 1989, in Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon.

Peter Leonard Judge died in 1985, leaving his entire estate to the Artists' General Benevolent Institution.[246]

15

Posthumous Reputation

1946–2020

The Connoisseur's Library of Strange Fiction

Gollancz reissued *A Voyage to Arcturus* in August 1946, as the first in their Connoisseur's Library of Strange Fiction. As Lindsay had hoped, it was accompanied by E. H. Visiak's *Notes & Queries* essay "The Arcturan Shadow", as well as a "Publisher's Note" from Victor Gollancz, in which he explains the reason for the reissue:

> [*A Voyage to Arcturus*] was constantly being recommended to me in the late thirties: second-hand copies were then being searched for, and to such effect that one of my friends, who has been trying since before the war to get a copy through several booksellers who go in for this kind of thing, is still without one.

The Haunted Woman, second in the Connoisseur's Library, followed in 1947, along with the two other novels to be reissued in the series, Visiak's *Medusa*, and Charles Williams' *The Place of the Lion*. The printing of *A Voyage to Arcturus* sold out this time.[247]

The reissue seems to not to have generated any reviews in the UK, but on 29 November, "Books and Writers" on the BBC's Light Programme included some discussion of Lindsay's works by the writer Gerald Bullett (1893–1958) and the poet Sheila Shannon (1913–2007). Jacqueline Lindsay thought the presentation a "complete fiasco", with Bullett "jeering" and Shannon seemingly not interested.[248]

There were, though, several reviews in Australian papers. A long review

appeared in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* (12 October 1946, p. 19), from the book columnist "Miss Bronte":

> I have never used the term on this page before, but Lindsay was a genius—a minor genius, perhaps, but, nevertheless, a genius in the sense of one having extraordinary power of invention or origination…
>
> David Lindsay sat down to write a fantasy in which the central character sucked dry all the segments of the lemon we call life. If Maskull found them bitter, at least they were invigorating enough to keep him going until he reached the end. And, after that, as Krag says: "What else is there to live for?"
>
> If you want a nice novel, a diverting novel, a funny novel, a sentimental novel, an uplifting novel—don't read "A Voyage to Arcturus."
>
> But if you want something to think over, argue over, disagree with, come back to, talk about—then don't miss it.

The Melbourne *Argus* (9 November 1946, p. 12), after briefly summarising the plot, went on to say:

> All this sounds like the wildest nonsense. That is what it might have been but for the psychological and mystical insight of the author. David Lindsay had no great stylistic gifts as a writer (he died last year), but he made up for this lack with an extraordinary talent that borders closely on genius… He achieves his results by hypnotising the reader into a state of fascinated horror, leading him on by the very force of the spell that he casts. The whole atmosphere of the book is unreal, and yet the illusion is consistently maintained. Lindsay set out to write an allegory and he did so with astonishing success.

But "D. E.", writing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (23 November 1946, p. 11), was unconvinced:

> Too often a wild, coloured, and fiery imagination passes for genius,

especially when it approaches incoherence because of lack of control and discipline. That seems to be the case in this peculiar book, which is as disturbing as a nightmare, as unwholesome as a dose of poison.

The following year, "Miss Bronte" returned to Lindsay, this time reviewing *The Haunted Woman* (Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, 3 May 1947, p. 18):

> *A Voyage to Arcturus* was good. If anything, from the purely literary point of view, *The Haunted Woman* is better… It is a novel artistically far beyond anything most of our well-thought-of writers of today could produce. In fact, in this reviewer's opinion, it must be seriously considered as one of the major pieces of imaginative fiction of this century.

A little later that year, the Sydney *Sun* (6 September, p. 4), reviewing the first three of Gollancz's reissues, covered both *Arcturus* and *The Haunted Woman* in one review:

> Taken separately, Lindsay's "Arcturus" is the most horrifying of the three, his "Haunted Woman" the most beautiful…
>
> [*Arcturus*] can be read as the very ecstasy of madness made more horrible by its air of iron reason; or it can be read as a sort of puzzling Edgar Rice Burroughs story of another, fantastic world, where the only familiar thing is speech. Finally, it can be read by the initiated as an inspired analysis of the quality of Being. Which way soever, it must be read as a masterpiece…
>
> Finally "The Haunted Woman," Lindsay's second work… is a beautifully, at times brilliantly, done study of a young woman gifted with certain mystical perceptions… The story is haunting, with a bitter nightmarish flavor that makes its powerful account of passion the more telling. Not only that, but it is convincing merely as a narrative, and incredulity does not enter the reader's mind at any point. Lindsay is a consummate writer because he can control his tone, keeping it low and normal, so that the shocks, when they come,

have a screaming quality of pure, impersonal terror. Yet the ending is peaceful and natural.

Such reviews underline the tragic element in Lindsay's writing career—passionate readers of his work were evidently out there, it just took time to find them. Sadly, he was not around to hear any of this praise.

C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien

Perhaps the most important factor in the building of Lindsay's posthumous reputation has been prominent writers who mention his work favourably. Even a brief word from a cultural giant can lead new readers to his work. The first such figure was C. S. Lewis (1898–1963), who read *A Voyage to Arcturus* some time between 1935 (when it was recommended to him by his friend Arthur Greeves[249]) and 1938 (when he, in turn, recommended it to Roger Lancelyn Green,[250] who would go on to mention it in his 1957 study *Into Other Worlds*). Lewis produced his own interplanetary adventure, *Out of the Silent Planet*, in 1938, the first in what would be a trilogy. Evidently influenced by H. G. Wells, and at least partly written as a reaction to the philosophical science fiction of Olaf Stapledon, Lewis would nevertheless write that the "real father of my planet books is David Lindsay's *Voyage to Arcturus*".[251] It was, however, the second novel in the series, *Perelandra* (1943), where the influence is most explicit, particularly in the ending, where Ransom's vision of universal harmony echoes Nightspore's vision of horror from the tower of Muspel. The intent is diametrically opposite, but the means of presenting the cosmic order is the same, to the extent that Lewis even uses some of the same terms as Lindsay (whose "green corpuscles" and "whirls of white light" become Lewis's "corpuscles of momentary brightness" and "ribbons or serpents of light").

Lewis went on to explicitly praise *Arcturus* in "On Stories", which was first published in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* in 1947 (though this was a revision of a talk given in 1940 at Merton College, "The Kappa Element in Fiction"). In it, Lewis makes it clear that he disagrees with Lindsay's outlook (in one letter he calls it "detestable, almost diabolist"[252]), but appreciated the

fact that Lindsay was using science-fictional adventure as a means to explore ideas relevant to "the spirit", saying that Lindsay was "the first writer to discover what 'other planets' are really good for in fiction."[253] Lewis would also later write, of his humorous novel *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), that "my idea of spiritual cannibalism probably owes something to the horrible scenes of 'absorbing' in David Lindsay's neglected *Voyage to Arcturus*."[254]

Lewis's friend J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973) also read *Arcturus* "with avidity",[255] but its most evident impact on his fiction is in an unfinished work titled "Leaves from The Notion Club Papers", and takes the form of a criticism of Lindsay's novel. In one scene, two men—the archaeologist Guildford and the poet Frankley—discuss interplanetary fiction, and the means by which writers get their characters to other worlds. Guildford is scornful of Lindsay's use of such "scientifictitious bunkum" as "Crystal torpedoes, and 'back-rays', and levers for full speed-ahead (faster than light, mark you)",[256] adding that Lindsay had better methods for getting his characters to Tormance, such as the séance.

In an early essay on Lindsay, Robert Harvey thought he detected some influence on Tolkien's most famous work:

> The Un-man's fall into fire at the end of *Perelandra* recalled Gangnet's tumble into Muspel-fire, and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* ends in a cave (like Lewis's, with a volcanic abyss at its end) where Gollum falls into the fire… There is even a verbal reminiscence: Nightspore, in Muspel, hears "a rhythmical vibration of the air—the silent, continuous throbbing of some mighty engine" and in Tolkien's volcano "all the while far below there was a rumour and a trouble as of great engines throbbing and labouring."[257]

Considering the meaning "great engines" and other signs of industrialisation have throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, it seems unlikely this was a point of direct influence, but nevertheless, having such key fantasy-writers as Tolkien and Lewis as appreciative readers would stand Lindsay's reputation in good stead as the century progressed.

"A Strange Scottish Novel"

The first major essay on David Lindsay appeared in the 1951 issue of *The Scots Chronicle*. (This was the first, and only, issue under that title. Before and after, it was *The Burns Chronicle*. It had been published since 1892.) "A Strange Scottish Novel: David Lindsay's 'A Voyage to Arcturus'" was by the Leicester-born writer and journalist J. B. (John Barclay) Pick (1921–2015).

Level-headed and passionate about Lindsay's work, it was evident Pick was intent on both defending and celebrating this "Strange Scottish novel":

> Lindsay is not in any sense a bad writer, he is an excellent writer in a queer, original way—that is, he has few equals in describing essences… His imagery, often drawn from music, is burning and impressive. His writing has tremendous imaginative force, a vivid, hallucinatory quality, and not words finally but imaginative power informing words proves a writer great. Lindsay doesn't use the wrong words, he uses the most searching ones savagely, sometimes uncouthly, and cares nothing for grace.[258]

A second important essay from Pick followed in 1964, in *Studies in Scottish Literature*. "The Work of David Lindsay" is the first critical assessment of *all* of Lindsay's writings, including the then-unpublished novels *The Violet Apple* and *The Witch*. (Pick was in correspondence with Jacqueline Lindsay, still alive at this time, which means she surely must have read this essay.) It's evident he's intent on establishing Lindsay's reputation by making the key decision to frame him as a *Scottish* writer, something that, despite his being born and living in the South of England, nevertheless seems to sum up the way Lindsay was never going to fit into the mainstream of English-language literature:

> Everything that David Lindsay wrote is the work of a man who cannot help but see what others do not, the true nature of what he calls "the vast shadow-house of earth and sky." To find an individual Scottish novel comparable with *A Voyage to Arcturus* in force and

> strangeness—and it is in no way comparable in depth and scope—you would have to go back as far as *The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. It is odd that the most extraordinary Scottish novelist of this century should have been so neglected.[259]

Pick would go on to make Scottish writers, particularly those of a visionary bent, a speciality, culminating in his 1993 study *The Great Shadow House: Essays on the Metaphysical Tradition in Scottish Fiction* (whose title, as Pick explains in a note, "is a misquotation from David Lindsay's *The Witch*"[260]). Two chapters in this book are about Lindsay.

Pick would continue to write about and champion Lindsay's work throughout the twentieth century, producing the first biography, and editing and introducing the unpublished novels, as well as the Canongate Classics editions of *The Haunted Woman* (1987) and *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1992). As well as being one of the most insightful critics on Lindsay and his work, then, Pick was also one of the two main figures responsible for bringing him back into print. (Coincidentally, the other, Colin Wilson, was also born in Leicester.)

The BBC Third Programme

On the evening of Sunday 24 June 1956, the BBC presented a radio dramatisation of *A Voyage to Arcturus* on its "highbrow" Third Programme channel. Starting at 8:10pm and finishing at 10:55pm, with a fifteen-minute interval roughly halfway through, the programme was recorded and re-broadcast the following Saturday, and again the following year on Sunday 10 March.

It was adapted and produced by E. J. King Bull (1897–1988), one of several writer-producers who were trying to forge radio drama into its own art form driven by plot, dialogue and mood, with an extensive use of music and sound effects, to set it apart from TV drama. (Science fiction writer Ian Watson, who heard the broadcast, remembered its "haunting musical effects"[261] and "eerie musique concrète",[262] which was composed by John Buckland.)

The production had a cast of sixteen, with the actor playing Nightspore doubling as the narrator (and so, as critic J. C. Trewin noted when reviewing the production, "the matter of dual personality is neatly treated"[263]), while the creature of the "third sex", Leehallfae, was played by an actress, Marjorie Westbury, her lines delivered "in a form of semi-recitative".[264] Inevitably, elements of Lindsay's novel were left out, including the ride on the shrowk, the absorption of Digrung, and the flying-boat journey to Lichstorm. Robert Harvey, writing in 1963, thought that "in stressing the mystery, the BBC seemed to lose sight of the meaning"[265] of the novel, but this was no superficial drama. Other novels adapted by the Third Programme around this time included those by William Golding, Henry Green, Marcel Proust and C. P. Snow, alongside dramas by Ibsen, Pirandello, Lope de Vega, Brecht, and Aeschylus. *A Voyage to Arcturus*, then, was being treated as a highbrow work of art, its adaptation deliberately challenging and experimental in form.

Unfortunately, neither the recording nor the script seem to have survived.

Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction

In June 1963, Gollancz reissued *A Voyage to Arcturus* again, this time in their Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction series, alongside Visiak's *Medusa* and M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*.

This time, the reissue *was* reviewed in the UK, including in the satirical magazine *Punch* (19 June, p. 901–2), who concluded:

> The overall effect is as if a bright schoolboy were trying to imitate C. S. Lewis; though in fact this dates from 1920, before Professor Lewis harnessed SF to theology.

Brigid Brophy (1929–1995), writing in *The New Statesman* (14 June, p. 904–5), thought Lindsay's novel boiled down to its author's view of sex, including the surprising interpretation that "the two ambiguous, interchangeable supernatural powers on the planet represent the author's view of the sexes". The review is faintly mocking throughout, ending:

> A displeasing smell of repression, of morbid hygiene, pervades the book—which is a genuine curio, but aesthetically of the same order as an embryo picked in a bottle.

Ian Blake in the *Irish Times* (29 June, p. 10), fittingly, likened it to a "science fiction story written by William Blake", but "the eventual recounting of it grows tedious, like a bad, long poem by Tennyson".

There were, though, positive takes on the book, including—at last—*The Times Literary Supplement* (5 July, p. 497):

> Any description of the book must give an uncouth, bizarre impression, and this is not unjust. But what emerges after sympathetic reading is something quite other—a sense of the remarkable profundity and coherence of the vision… The achievement of the book exactly balances the ambition of its intention. This, surely, is rare.

And *The Times* (29 August, p. 11):

> The imagination is incandescent; it lights both attractions and repulsions within the reader. One cannot simply say that here disbelief is suspended; a more difficult thing has been done; the reader is given new vistas of his mortal fears and immortal longings… The invention is continuous, the sense of mystery sustained. If that vague and much abused word genius can have any definition, then *A Voyage to Arcturus* is one of its products.

Several reviews in Antipodean papers followed, including *The Sydney Morning Herald* (28 September, p. 15):

> Taken in its entirety, it resembles nothing so much as one of Blake's long prophetic poems; even more, it is evocative of a Blake drawing. Loaded with symbolism, laden with mysticism, it is an overlong giant conundrum…

And the Sydney *Bulletin* (12 October, p. 48–50):

> It has the imaginative coherence combined with repeated logical shocks of "Alice in Wonderland" but in a realm of physical violence that was tabu to Lewis Carroll… It is the landscape of a remarkable mind.

The title of this series of reissues was, perhaps, intended as a self-fulfilling prophecy, as Victor Gollancz himself explained in an interview at the time: "I'm doing a very modest edition of each book—very modest indeed. They'll sell out at once and become rare in their turn."[266] But they kept Lindsay's key work in print and available for at least some of those who wanted to read it.

Following the initial three volumes, a further five books in the series were published, including, in 1964, *The Haunted Woman*. Novelist and poet Robert Nye (1939–2016), reviewing this reissue of Lindsay's second novel in *The Scotsman* (14 May 1964, p. 2), wrote:

> Lindsay was a writer of real imagination and skill, who sought to meet Poe's essential requirement in a tale of this kind: singleness of mood, the incidents being subjugated to the one unique effect. A gentle and unforced yarn, a love story set—with agreeable lack of supernatural machinery—in another dimension politely gruesome, oddly compelling and disturbing in the natural transition of its wonders and horrors. "The Haunted Woman" is a metaphysical thriller in the best sense of that phrase.

Macmillan's Library of Science-Fiction Classics

In the same year as the Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction reissue, *A Voyage to Arcturus* received its first publication in the US, as part of Macmillan's hardback Library of Science-Fiction Classics, a series that included Jack London's *Before Adam* and *The Star Rover*, *The Hopkins Manuscript* by R. C. Sherriff, *The Weigher of Souls* and *The Earth Dwellers* by André Maurois, *Dr Ox's Experiment* by William Pené du Bois, and *The Poison Belt* by Arthur

Conan Doyle. This was, according to Gary K. Wolfe, the first time Lindsay's novel had been explicitly associated with the term "science fiction".[267]

The series was edited by astronomer and science-writer Kenneth Heuer, who got his friend, the anthropologist Loren Eiseley (1907–1977), to write the introduction. Eiseley's own writing tended towards a celebration of the wonder and diversity to be found in the natural world, and he was perhaps an unusual choice to tackle Lindsay's often brutal novel, but it's a valuable take, coming as it does from such a different angle:

> In the end one arises from this book not as from an idle tale, but from a spiritual catharsis the more surprising because it will have been transmitted, like the music of the drum that Maskull followed, dimly and from far away. David Lindsay was perhaps too honest to record one voice alone among the many conflicting voices that represent the living world.

The Macmillan text was edited, presumably to make it more US-friendly and up-to-date. These were mostly minor changes, such as hyphenations, spellings, and modern rephrasing ("twenty-eight" instead of "eight-and-twenty", or "We set off from there" replacing "It's from there that we set off"), with US terms replacing English ones ("room" for "apartment", "flashlight" for "torch"). But the effect was, perhaps, to subtly divorce Lindsay's text from its origins. Keeping the original phraseology and wording might have alerted readers that this was an older text, to be approached with an awareness of (and sympathy to) its period style. Making such minor changes perhaps led to a subtle mixed message about the book's age, leading it to feel familiar one moment, but not the next. This might not have mattered too much, had this edited text not gone on to become, in effect, the standard version of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, thanks to its use in the novel's first US paperback edition from Ballantine, which in turn became the text that was digitised and released on the internet through Project Gutenberg in 1998—making it the basis for the many print-on-demand editions the book received in the twenty-first century. The likelihood is, then, that any given reader today will have this subtly adulterated version of Lindsay's novel before them.

One of the reviewers of this US edition was Charles A. Brady, writing in *The Buffalo Evening News* (26 October 1963, p B-10). Brady has his own place in the history of the novel, as it was in a letter to him that C. S. Lewis wrote the much-quoted endorsement that "The real father of my planet books is David Lindsay's 'Voyage to Arcturus'".[268] Agreeing with Lewis that "Lindsay's theology leaves something to be desired in Christian terms", Brady, in his review, nevertheless found Lindsay "a most seductive narrator with an unremitting power of fresh surprise."

Marilynn Leathers in *The Arizona Republic* (27 October 1963, p. 63) found it "an unusual and different reading experience", while Richard Rhodes in *The Kansas City Star* (27 October 1963, p. 80) thought Lindsay "as fine a writer as Lewis, and nearly as inventive as Tolkien". His science may have been "clumsy", but:

> …in the last analysis Lindsay's dated qualities are unimportant. It is his richly imagined conception of the progress of a soul to understanding, set in a world no more fantastic than that of the "Odyssey" or Spenser's "Fairie Queen," that gives his work its own peculiar stature.

The New York Times Book Review's piece on the novel (24 November, p. 60) was written by British author Kingsley Amis, who had made his enthusiasm for science fiction—or, at least, the sort of science fiction he liked—clear in *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (1960). *Arcturus*, though, was not the sort he liked:

> It is the kind of rambling fantasy, rich in ambiguous symbolism, which slightly repels the many who like novels to make solid sense, and violently attracts the few who enjoy dredging them for deep, dark, mysterious secrets about Life and the Universe.

Arthur R. Gold, writing in *The San Francisco Examiner* (12 January 1964, p. 18), in contrast, found the mystery both deep and dark, but in a more meaningful way:

> ...so obscure is Lindsay's symbolism, so indefinite is the allusive content of Maskull's experience, that our sense of mystery is never stilled but always deepened—sometimes, one must admit, to the point of exasperation. All we ever know is that Maskull's quest will involve his destruction and that there is an irony, a malignant force, somewhere at the centre of nature.

Lindsay's novel was also reviewed in the science fiction magazines of the day. Avram Davidson, writing in *Fantasy & Science Fiction* (March 1964, p. 82), found that it "promptly stops being a novel and becomes an allegory—and a damned insufferable one, too." But P. Schuyler Miller, in *Analog* (April 1964, p. 92), though pointing out that, despite it appearing in Macmillan's Library of Science Fiction, it was *not* science fiction, nevertheless found it a "remarkable book for 1920 or for any time… as unclassifiable now as forty years ago."

Making it to the US was, undoubtedly, an important milestone in *A Voyage to Arcturus*'s history, but it was still in an expensive hardback, and in a cultural climate where, if you wanted science fiction, there were plenty of lower-priced alternatives. The novel's US moment had not yet arrived.

Colin Wilson

The writer Colin Wilson (1931–2013) played a particularly significant role in the revival of Lindsay's literary reputation, and as well as writing on Lindsay, had a direct hand in the republication of some of his works, including the unpublished novels. At the time he first read *A Voyage to Arcturus*, around 1963, Wilson had been a published writer of both non-fiction (*The Outsider*, in 1956, being his breakthrough work), and fiction (his first novel, *Ritual in the Dark*, being published in 1960).

That first read came as a result of a recommendation from a friend whom Wilson thought to be "a bad judge of books",[269] and initially he wasn't too impressed. It was only after he explained the plot to his friend, the novelist Bill Hopkins, that Wilson found himself returning to the book and appreciating it more. He wrote to Lindsay's daughter Diana, discovered there

were unpublished novels, and tried to interest his own publisher, Gollancz, in bringing out *The Violet Apple*. But Victor Gollancz, though initially intrigued, turned out to have already rejected the novel when Lindsay himself sent it to him.

Wilson first wrote about Lindsay in *Eagle and Earwig*, a 1965 collection of essays on writers (including L. H. Myers and Lindsay's fellow-Colfeian Henry Williamson):

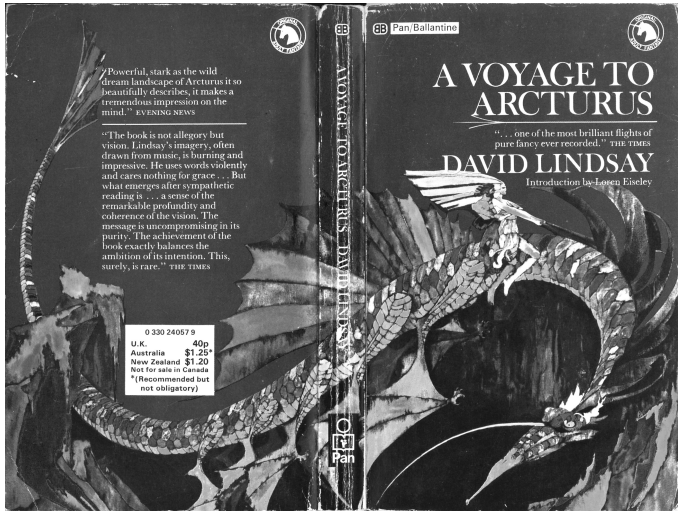
> David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus* is one of the strangest, and most certainly one of the greatest, books of the twentieth century. Yet its greatness is of such a curious order that it is still almost unknown today…

Wilson had already written to E. H. Visiak to ask about Lindsay, and in 1966 the two met in person. The following year, when he'd temporarily relocated to the US to teach (Wilson in fact lived, as Lindsay had, in Cornwall), he mentioned Lindsay in his lectures. While there, he received from Visiak "an utterly miserable letter": now living in a retirement home, Visiak was, Wilson said, "dying of boredom".[270] To give him something to do, he suggested they collaborate on a biography of Lindsay. This collaboration would eventually become the first major book on Lindsay, *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*.

The Ballantine Paperback and the Counterculture

Ballantine Books, founded in 1952, had published the first authorised paperback editions of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy in 1965, after the unauthorised versions from Ace Books (which initially paid Tolkien himself no royalties) became a runaway success. Following this, Ian and Betty Ballantine looked for other, similar works to bring out to an evidently fantasy-hungry adult audience. E. R. Eddison's *The Worm Ouroboros* and his Zimiamvia books followed, along with Peake's Gormenghast trilogy. Colin Wilson wrote to them suggesting *A Voyage to Arcturus*, and offered to write the introduction. The Ballantines (who, Gary K. Wolfe suggests, may have

already had their eye on the book) bought the rights (and the Americanised text) from Macmillan, but, as Loren Eiseley's introduction came as part of the package, Wilson was never called on for the introduction.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Introduction by Loren Eiseley

Ballantine/Pan paperback of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, with cover art by Bob Pepper

The first paperback edition of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, then, came out in the US in November 1968. The cover, with its mix of Art Nouveau swirls and boldly-coloured primitivism, was by Bob Pepper (1938–2019), perhaps best known at the time for his record-sleeve art, including Love's 1967 album *Forever Changes*, which is a good indication of the sort of countercultural readership the book attracted. As is this piece from *SF Review* #31 (June 1969, p. 37–8) by Earl Evers:

> It's a book-length stoned rap in the best sense, full of both obvious and subtle mysticism, contrived and natural symbolism, and more than a little real Truth. (I don't know what Truth is, I only know that very few books contain any, and this is one of the few.) I assume the power of Lindsay's vision derives from madness rather than from drugs, but it doesn't matter—his *genius loci*, whatever it is, can also dwell in some of the acid-reclaimed territory of my own mind. And

that's quite enough for me.

Evers goes on to call *Arcturus* "the unrevised first draft of one of the greatest pieces of mystical writing in the English language", and that "every writer and true fan of fantasy or sf should read this book clear through even if he doesn't enjoy it".

A number of science fiction readers *did* read it, and certainly a few *didn't* enjoy it:

> *A Voyage to Arcturus* is unscientific, or even anti-scientific, and as fiction it is scarcely worthy of publication; and as science fiction, alas, it fails because it would not pass even the weakest tests that could be devised. Indeed, it is not even speculative, to use the word much bandied about nowadays… [Its] message, after which apologists must seek so enthusiastically, is much the same animal as inhabits that more recent tower of Babel, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Kubrick and Lindsay share a fuzzy-mindedness which, when disguised by a few quick passes of the hand, appears to some as evidence of deep thought—nay, as deep thought itself.
>
> John Foyster, *SF Commentary* 7 (1969), p. 36–7

> Lindsay smacks you in the face with the allegorical implications and mystical profundities so often that you can't miss his profound intentions… David Lindsay is said to have been a practicing spiritualist. Perhaps he wrote this novel while in a trance.
>
> Ron Goulart, *Venture* (May 1969), p. 114–5

Others, though admitting the book had its faults, nevertheless acknowledged its power:

> It would be pleasant if Lindsay had had a better command of the language, and especially if his characters did not all talk alike (for they certainly don't all *think* alike); but the occasional violence he does to English soon passes by unnoticed, or is swamped out by his tremendous feeling for color and indeed for all kinds of sensual

> experience. As for the science, Lindsay gives you fair warning at the outset that he cares nothing for the agreed-upon world of the sciences… The end is ambiguous, except insofar as the whole mosaic may add up to something unstated. For me, as for Lewis, "this ghastly vision comes through..."
>
> William Atheling, Jr.,[271] *Amazing Stories* (July 1969), p. 119–120

> In one light it is too silly a book to get excited about, in another light it is too awesome to joke about. There will be as many lights as there are readers.
>
> J. B. Post, *Luna* #5 (1969), p. 32

Initially, the paperback was branded "A Ballantine Science Fiction Classic", but subsequent reprints labelled it as fantasy, and it is generally now considered part of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series, that went on to define the nascent publishing genre of fantasy, reprinting the likes of Lord Dunsany, George MacDonald, William Morris, and others.

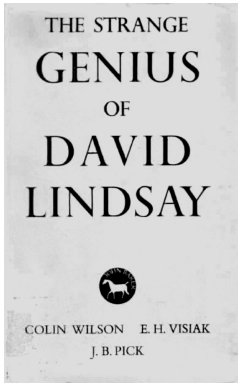
Something of the impact that *A Voyage to Arcturus* had on those readers of the more countercultural persuasion—the sort who would have found John Foyster's comparison of *Arcturus* to *2001* a positive—can be found outside the reviews. A small number of women born around the time, for instance, were named Joiwind; a house with a tower-like observatory, built in 1975, and which later became home to the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, was named "Arcturus" after the novel; in March 1970 the Magic Theatre group put on several performances of a piece called "A Voyage to Arcturus" at the Theatre Genesis in New York,[272] its countercultural or experimental credentials expressed by its being advertised as "Starring: Everyone".

Perhaps the most evident example of the book's resonance with the alternative culture of the day is William Holloway's 1971 film of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Started when Holloway was nineteen years old and studying film at Antioch College in Ohio, its cast was made up of fellow students and amateur actors, and it was mostly shot at Warren Dunes State Park in Michigan. It was finished thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, after Rod Serling, creator of *The Twilight Zone*, saw a rough cut.[273] (Holloway

would later add some more finishing touches, including colour washes—the initial film being in black and white—music and voice-over, for its 2003 DVD release.) A fairly literal adaptation in the main (within serious budgetary constraints), it fits effortlessly into the countercultural idiom of the times, as when Krag presents Maskull and Nightspore with oral doses of "Arcturian backlight, in crystal form" as a means of transporting them to Tormance.

A Voyage to Arcturus may have failed to gel with science fiction fandom—certainly in the days when the growing experimentalism of the genre's New Wave was as much resisted as welcomed—but nevertheless found more of a welcome with the counterculture. Prior to this (and, indeed, still after this), *Arcturus* was seen as something difficult and experimental—adaptations would be challenging and modernistic—but now it had found a second cultural niche to fit, chiming, as it did, with the psychedelic ideal of the highly imaginative, multi-sensory quest into visionary realms.

The Strange Genius of David Lindsay, and the Lindsay Revival



After Colin Wilson and E. H. Visiak began work on their joint book about Lindsay, Visiak heard rumours that J. B. Pick was also planning a biography (which he had been working on since at least 1964, when he put an "Information Please" notice in the *TLS*: "David Lindsay, author of *A Voyage to Arcturus*:—Letters from him, for a biography"[274]). When contacted, it turned out Pick was happy to have his material included in their book, so it

now became a three-way collaboration. Pick provided a biographical essay and a look at the unpublished novels; Visiak, a number of short essays on Lindsay the man and on *The Haunted Woman*; Wilson, a single, long essay on the main works. (Dropped, for reasons of space, were an essay by Visiak on *Devil's Tor* and Lindsay's letters to Visiak.)

The Strange Genius of David Lindsay was published by John Baker in 1970. That provocative word "genius" was latched onto by reviewers. In *The Scotsman* (7 November 1970, p. 19), Robert Nye's piece was headed "David Lindsay: a Scottish novelist of genius":

> It is difficult to speak of the experience of reading "Arcturus" without sounding drunk—and this despite the fact that its genius is stone-cold, stern and sober. Perhaps that word "genius" will help define Lindsay's grip. It is not a word in fashion, it is not a word which twentieth century criticism likes at all, but sooner or later you have to use it if you try to communicate your excitement about Lindsay.

The following month, an unsigned review titled "Sublimities in a blotting-paper style" appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* (20 November, p. 1346):

> The authors may be correct in calling David Lindsay a genius. He was *sui generis* and had the originality of the great. But he did not succeed, even in *A Voyage to Arcturus*, in producing any work of genius because he despised the medium in which he worked, not merely the novel as a form, but the use of words and their exclusion. His work is rather like an unclaimed copy of a Hieronymus Bosch original by a mediocre pupil of his school.

Both Visiak and Pick wrote to the *TLS* in response to this second review, Visiak saying the reviewer had misunderstood the anecdote about Lindsay's reaction to the vacuous appearance of the moon one night as depression when it was in fact "the abstract, essentially lonely sense of his mysticism", while Pick wanted to qualify the idea that Lindsay simply rejected all

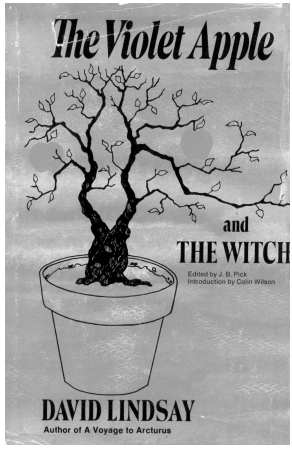
pleasure, and to counter the notion that his style was inadequate:

> The relationship of Lindsay's mind to his style is that of a vigorous and muscular man to an ill-fitting suit of clothes. It is the man who matters, not the clothes. It is the power of Lindsay's vision and the fecundity of his imagination that matter, not his literary manners. If anyone feels it necessary to complain about Lindsay's style the only useful reply seems to me to be: "Did you hear the drum-beats?" Your reviewer obviously did not; many readers will.[275]

The combination of *A Voyage to Arcturus* now being widely available in paperback (a UK release of the Ballantine paperback, by Pan Books, came in 1972), and there being information on the man and critical examination of his works, led to something of a Lindsay revival in the 1970s. His letters to Visiak, which had been left out of *The Strange Genius*, appeared in the long-running literary quarterly *Adam International Review* (Volume XXXV, #346–348) in 1971, in an issue that also included letters by Dickens and a number of articles about Beethoven. The following year, selections from Lindsay's "Sketch Notes for a New Philosophy" were published in a special Lindsay edition of the Scottish literary journal *Lines Review* (No. 40, March 1972), along with extracts from *The Violet Apple* and *The Witch*, and a review of *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay* by Roderick Watson. It was also in this year that the typescript of the "Sketch Notes" was presented to the National Library of Scotland by Lindsay's eldest daughter Diana Moon. (Additional papers would be deposited in 1980, meaning the NLS now holds the typescripts of *The Violet Apple*, *The Witch*, *A Christmas Play*, and a small number of letters, including some from Lindsay's sister Margaret.)

It was around this time that Alexander Besher (1951–2020), an editor of *The Chicago Review*, contacted Lindsay's daughters to ask about the possibility of getting the two unpublished novels into print. He at first failed to find a publisher for them, so suggested instead an anthology of extracts which would include segments from the unpublished novels, but the Lindsay family didn't like this idea. Finally, in 1976, the combined volume of Lindsay's two unpublished works, *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, was published by The

Chicago Review Press (founded in 1973). Colin Wilson, who'd signed onto the project from the start, provided an overall foreword, and Pick, who edited the texts for publication, wrote a separate introduction for each of the two novels.



The Violet Apple received a UK hardback release in 1978 from Sidgwick & Jackson, while *Devil's Tor* was republished in hardback in the US by Arno Press in the same year, as part of their Lost Race and Adult Fantasy Fiction series. It was also around this time that Lindsay's works received their first translations, with *A Voyage to Arcturus* coming out in French (1975), German (1975), Dutch (1976), Spanish (1979, in Argentina) and Japanese (1980), and *The Haunted Woman*, in the following decade, in Japanese (1981) and German (1986). *Sphinx* received its first reissue in 1988, from Xanadu Books in the UK and Carroll & Graf in the US. *The Haunted Woman* had its first paperback edition from Canongate Classics in 1987. By this point, then, all of Lindsay's novels except *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* had been reprinted in modern editions.

Of these releases, *The Violet Apple* received a few reviews in both the wider press and specialist science fiction journals:

> [The last two chapters] are like hallucinatory music, music that compels pictures in the mind. Their writing is beautifully controlled,

wonderfully exact—a point worth stressing since this writer is frequently accused of being stylistically uncouth, even if imaginatively compelling.

Robert Nye, *The Scotsman*, 1 July 1978, p. 19

There are times when the writing seems fulsomely romantic rather than spiritually exalted. But the risks are those generated by a large and almost intractable subject. Few readers will find the novel anything less than compelling and it well deserves its long-delayed publication.

Philip Sturgess, *British Book News*, October 1978, p. 844

This is the first edition of a work of outstanding brilliance, a classic work of imaginative fiction. No one whose interest in the literature of the imagination is serious can afford to pass over this book. Casual readers may find the mundane component of it rather dated—so much so that it will be an effort for them to attune themselves to it, but the quality of the prose will give them every chance, and the rewards are considerable.

Brian Stableford, *Vector* #89 (1978), p. 36–8

This is probably his best book after *A Voyage to Arcturus*. In the two combined he fires off his whole magazine—but scarcely a single hit was acknowledged in his own lifetime. On a purely literary level the book must still be counted far from perfect, but as a psychological (and partly autobiographical) sequel to *A Voyage to Arcturus* it offers some fascinating insights into the mind and character of a strange and unique writer.

D. West, *Foundation*, 1 September 1979, p. 97–99

Sphinx was reviewed less widely, and fared less well:

[Lindsay's] talent for exotic landscape and bizarre plot deserts him in this starchy drawing-room romance of cardboard characters and hyper-ventilating emotions… The unforgivable crime here is that the

> subplot of the novel, concerning Nicholas' invention of a machine to record dreams, holds tremendous promise and delivers a few passages of intense, almost mystical prose… The rest is piffle.
>
> *Kirkus Reviews*, 15 June 1988, p. 716

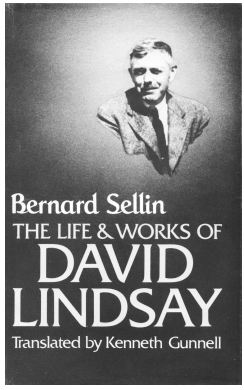
> It is not so much a good book as an interesting one, a novel about itself, and, with terrible irony, about Lindsay's own career… You'll be surprised to find that Lindsay isn't nearly as bad a writer as he is reputed to be… he wrote spritely dialogue and *Sphinx* can almost be read as a romantic comedy with a fantastic subplot.
>
> *Aboriginal SF* (March/April 1989), p. 15–16

Academic and Critical Interest

The 1970s also saw the real beginning of an academic interest in Lindsay's work. Gary K. Wolfe, who would go on to become an important science fiction critic, included Lindsay in his dissertation in 1971, which focused on the work of George MacDonald, C. S. Lewis and Lindsay. Perhaps the first thesis to focus entirely on Lindsay was Jack Schofield's "David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*: Allegorical Dream Fantasy as a Literary Mode" in September 1972, which placed Lindsay's work in a tradition that included *The Dream of the Rood*, *Pearl*, *Piers Plowman*, *The Faerie Queene*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Phantastes* and *Finnegans Wake*. Schofield (1947–2020), born in Yorkshire, went on to write two more pieces related to Lindsay, a review of *The Strange Genius* (in *Studies in Scottish Fiction*, January 1972) and "Cosmic Imagery in *A Voyage to Arcturus*" in the science fiction journal *Extrapolation* (no. 13, 1972). Some time after that, he moved into writing about photography and computers, including the long-running "Ask Jack" technology column in *The Guardian*.

Further critical essays on Lindsay's work appeared in specialist Scottish journals such as *Studies in Scottish Literature* ("'Purely as Entertainment'? *Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* as a Representative Work of David Lindsay" by J. Derrick McClure in 1973, "David Lindsay and George MacDonald" by Gary K. Wolfe in 1974, "The Structure of *A Voyage to Arcturus*" by Melvin Raff in 1980) and *The Scottish Literary Journal* ("Language and Logic in *A*

Voyage to Arcturus" by J. Derrick McClure in 1974, "The Previously Unpublished Novels of David Lindsay" by J. Herdman in 1976), though there were a variety of other journals, including *The Journal of Narrative Technique* ("Conflation of Genres and Myths in David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*" by Eric S. Rabkin in 1977), *Genre* ("Symbolic Fantasy" by Gary K. Wolfe in 1977), and *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* ("Visionary Allegory in David Lindsay's 'A Voyage to Arcturus'" by Kathryn Hume in 1978).



Bernard Sellin's thesis "David Lindsay (1878–1945): sa vie, son oeuvre", submitted to the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle–Paris III in 1977, is notable not only for being a study of Lindsay's life and work in French, but for being the basis of the English-language book *The Life & Works of David Lindsay*, translated by Kenneth Gunnell (1918–2001) and published by Cambridge University Press in 1981. It is an important source for details of Lindsay's life, as well as an in-depth study of his work. Sellin (1946–2021) went on to specialise in English and Scottish twentieth century literature, and continued to write on Lindsay, as in "Voyage Cosmique: H. G. Wells, David Lindsay, C. S. Lewis" (in *Just the Other Day: Essays on the Suture of the Future*, 1985), "Voyage imaginaire et quête philosophique dans A voyage to Arcturus de David Lindsay" (in *La littérature fantastique en Grande-Bretagne au tournant du siècle*, 1997), and "David Lindsay et *The Haunted Woman*" (in *Etudes écossaises* #7, 2001).

Sellin's biography attracted some reviews including, inevitably, the *Times*

Literary Supplement (19 June 1981, p. 702), from Tolkien biographer Humphrey Carpenter:

> To those who have the slightest inclination to giggle at fantasy and science fiction, *A Voyage to Arcturus* must be an incomparable source of mirth… Sellin's book is, alas, repetitive and inconclusive, and does little to whet one's appetite for Lindsay's lesser-known writings… However, *Arcturus* will undoubtedly live on, and one wishes that Professor Sellin had been able to explain exactly why this is so.

A more enthusiastic view of both Lindsay and of Sellin's book came from Alan Bold in *The Scotsman* (23 May 1981, p. 19):

> We are faced with the paradox of Lindsay: how could a man lacking literacy [*sic*] fluency nevertheless influence men like C. S. Lewis, inspire men like Colin Wilson, and eventually become something of a cult in the USA? Sellin's solution is to argue that Lindsay's great contribution to literature derived from the quality of his thought… as Sellin says, "David Lindsay is an ideologist rather than a philosopher." … *A Voyage to Arcturus* is a masterpiece; and despite the impression given by Sellin (and Colin Wilson before him) it is a literary and not a philosophical masterpiece. Where Sellin breaks new critical ground is in showing how all of Lindsay's work is related and how rewarding the other novels are.

Gary K. Wolfe, writing in *Foundation #24* (February 1982, p. 103–5), pointed to what is, and is likely to remain, a limitation of *any* Lindsay biography, as well as a specific complaint about Sellin's approach:

> While the details of Lindsay's life—which make up about a quarter of the book—do much to put our curiosity to rest, they do not substantially explain his fiction, and Sellin's attempts to make such connections sometimes involves heroic leaps into pop psychoanalysis.

In the same year as the above review, a book by noted US literary critic Harold Bloom (1930–2019), *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism*, included a chapter about fantasy literature that focused chiefly on *A Voyage to Arcturus*. This was notable for two reasons. One is that Bloom would, with later books such as *The Western Canon* (1994) and *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998), achieve mainstream recognition and a much wider readership than perhaps any other academic who wrote about Lindsay, making him one of those key figures whose recommendation would bring Lindsay to a new audience. The other is that Bloom several times declared his outright obsession with Lindsay's most well-known novel, claiming to have read it "literally hundreds of times, indeed obsessively I have read copies of it to shreds".[276] In a 1981 piece in *The New York Times* (6 December, Section 7, p. 1), a number of writers were asked which book they wished they'd written, and, after dismissing such major works as the Book of Genesis or Tolstoy's short novels, Bloom said:

> The authentic religious impulse is difficult to locate in any age, perhaps most difficult now. I find it in Nathanael West's "Miss Lonelyhearts" and in David Lindsay's fantasy, "A Voyage to Arcturus," first published in 1920. Had I written either, I would be content.

What Bloom didn't say in this short piece was that he *had*, already, tried to write—or re-write—*A Voyage to Arcturus* in what would be his only attempt at a novel. *The Flight to Lucifer: A Gnostic Fantasy*, published in 1979, was an attempt, as Bloom said, "to assimilate Lindsay's characters and narrative patterns to the actual, historical cosmology, theology and mythology of second-century Gnosticism".[277] Unlike *Arcturus*, it does not leave its revelations to the end, but spells them out near the beginning:

> The solar system, ruled by the Archon called Elohim, was as much a dungeon as any wretched stone cellar... Laws of nature, instituted by the Archon, enslaved earth's universe and blocked even the ascent of the souls after death. The Creator or Demiurge, Ialdabaoth, miscalled Jehovah, had fashioned his entrapments most subtly.[278]

Once the adventure is underway, the similarities to Lindsay's novel start to drop off, but in the first few chapters, the influence is plainly written into the text, as terms and events are lifted directly from *A Voyage to Arcturus*: Bloom's hero, Seth Valentinus, is summoned by a dream to a meeting at a tower on Krag Island; while waiting there, Seth's friend Thomas Perscors takes him on a cliff-edge walk to a place where, listening very carefully, they can hear ghostly sounds, just as, in Lindsay's novel, Nightspore takes Maskull on a cliff-edge walk to the Gap of Sorgie to hear the spectral drum-beats…

Bloom came to disown the novel, and wrote no more fiction, but he continued to admire *A Voyage to Arcturus*, including it, for instance, in the long list of the literature he believed would form the twentieth century's contribution to the Western literary canon in his 1994 book of that name.

Science Fiction

Before the genre name was established, *A Voyage to Arcturus* was already in an uneasy relationship with what would come to be called "science fiction". Even C. S. Lewis's pronouncement that in it, Lindsay was "the first writer to discover what 'other planets' are really good for in fiction", points to the fact that Lindsay was not doing what other writers of interplanetary journeys *were* doing, and Tolkien's criticism of the novel's "scientifictitious bunkum" (its crystal torpedo, travelling "faster than light, mark you"), as well as his suggestion Lindsay would have been better off using the séance or the twinned towers of Starkness and Muspel as a more magical means of transport, both imply that the air of science fiction around the title (which was not Lindsay's) and the apparatus of travel were not so much genre indicators as misdirections.

But such matters were important to the science fiction community throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, initially because the nascent genre needed to define itself against what it was not (out-and-out fantasy, for instance), and, later, as segments of its fanbase sought to ring-fence it against the New Wave of the 1960s and 70s, which brought in a whole new type of unscientific inexactitude, in the form of literary experimentation. But, as can be seen from some of the quotes above, there

were always reviewers (often authors themselves) who, while acknowledging the book was *not* science fiction, nevertheless admitted it had a relevant power.

One of the earliest was Groff Conklin, who used his "5 Star Shelf" column in *Galaxy Magazine* (December 1954) to write about some of the books that had brought him to read science fiction in the first place. One of them was *A Voyage to Arcturus*:

> I have reread this strange book at least six times since, the last time this summer, and I can only report that it still has all the fascination for me now that it did when I first read it. Oddly, one of its most fascinating aspects is its almost impenetrable obscurity. Each reading left me with a different idea of what Lindsay was driving at; I still don't really know…
>
> It is perhaps this unrelieved obscurity of purpose and story line that has kept the book almost unknown in the science fantasy world… Yet for somber magnificence of descriptive power and for an almost mesmeric ability to keep the reader going, whether he knows where or not, the book is an unforgettable experience, even though it is not really science fiction at all.[279]

A number of SF authors acknowledged Lindsay's novel as a powerful work (Harlan Ellison, Philip José Farmer and Gene Wolfe have all had positive things to say about it[280]), but its explicit influence on works of science fiction has been rare.

Perhaps the most evident example is Robert Silverberg's 1971 novel *Son of Man*, which Gary K. Wolfe (in 1982) called "the modern science-fiction work that most captures the spirit of Lindsay",[281] while Silverberg himself acknowledged the influence:

> The book was intended as a dreamlike vision, a surreal portrait of the future, not as a scientific text. One of my chief inspirations was a book called *A Voyage to Arcturus* by David Lindsay, which has some of the same emphasis on color and free imagination.[282]

"But mainly," he goes on to say, in a way that would no doubt please Lindsay, "the imagery came from my own dreams." The story concerns a modern man called Clay who finds himself transported to the almost unimaginably distant future of Earth, where humankind has evolved into strange new forms with an entirely different outlook on life, death, suffering, and pleasure. As on Tormance, eating, drinking, and physical contact have a much more direct, invigorating or painful effect on the body, and the body itself is plastic, changing easily, sometimes as a result of contact with new environments. There are new senses, or extended ones, revealing apparently new colours of light. The ultimate message, though, is not Krag's harsh doctrine of pain as a means of undermining the lure of a deceptive reality, but something far more countercultural:

> "All things are one. Love is all. Give yourself. Give."[283]

It's possible Silverberg's earlier novel *To Live Again* (1969) may have also been influenced by *Arcturus*. Set in a future where technology allows someone to take another person's personality into their own, to access as a sort of inner resource, the notion can't help recalling Lindsay's idea of "sorbing" others, and Oceaxe's characterisation of the process as acquiring "New strings for my harp".[284]

Another writer to admit an explicit influence was Ian Watson, who had first encountered Lindsay's novel thanks to the Third Programme radio adaptation. Watson proposed to Gollancz, his publisher at the time, that he write a sequel to *Arcturus*. When that notion was turned down, he presented a summary of his idea in "From Pan in the Home Counties—to Pain on a Far Planet: E. M. Forster, David Lindsay, and How the Voyage to Arcturus Should End" (*Foundation* #43, Summer 1988). An example of Lindsay's impact on Watson's fiction is the 1981 novel *Death Hunter*, which features a science-fictional attempt to fight "a parasite—a creature that feeds on our deaths… A thing that eats souls",[285] which recalls Lindsay's Crystalman, as seen in Nightspore's vision from the Tower of Muspel. Part of this fight, in the novel, involves a chase through many different realities, some of which are glimpsed only briefly. One of them seems to be a slightly more savage version

of Lindsay's Ifdawn Marest:

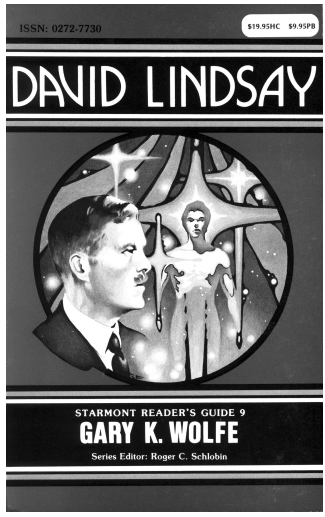
> A naked woman stood on the only bare spit of land; a writhing tentacle-arm sprouted from her chest like a hugely elongated third breast. She advanced across the spit towards an island, waving her breast tentacle before her, and as she waved it the sticky blobs of sundew withdrew from her path, and the pitcher plants shut their gullets so that she could stride across them like stepping stones, and the spikes of the fly-traps snapped shut prematurely. Somehow her tentacle controlled the vegetation. The woman howled at the sky and began to sing…[286]

The cover of the 1981 paperback of *Death Hunter*, depicting this brief scene, could well have been a proposed cover for *A Voyage to Arcturus* (and was painted by Peter Andrew Jones, who provided the cover for the 1980 paperback of *Arcturus* from Sphere Books).

But there is a sense in which *Arcturus* was eventually included in the wider science fiction canon—"because, well, there's nowhere else to put it and it does have a spaceship and another world in it", as Andy Swayer put it in a 2008 review.[287] In 1982, Lindsay became the subject of the ninth in the Starmont Reader's Guide series of single-author studies. Earlier volumes were on Arthur C. Clarke, Roger Zelazny, Philip José Farmer, Joe Haldeman, Frank Herbert, Alfred Bester, Theodore Sturgeon and Fritz Leiber—meaning Lindsay was the first writer to be included in the list who was not a then-living author who had explicitly published in the science fiction market. (The Lindsay volume was followed by studies of Samuel Delaney, Hal Clement and Philip K. Dick, and it was only then that similar authors such as H. P. Lovecraft and C. S. Lewis were included in the series.)

Starmont Reader's Guide 9: David Lindsay was written by Gary K. Wolfe, who was at the time the Dean of the College of Continuing Education at Roosevelt University, and who'd already written his first key work of science fiction criticism, *The Known and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science Fiction* (1979)—and would go on to write many more—and who has already

been mentioned above as having written on Lindsay himself in an academic context.



Starmont Reader's Guide 9: David Lindsay, with cover art by Stephen E. Fabian Sn. & Jr.

A Voyage to Arcturus, despite its title, can never fully be regarded as science fiction, but at the same time, can never fully be excluded, and will no doubt continue to enthuse and rile readers who come to it as science fiction, for as long as the term remains.

Opera, Oratorio and Odyssey

The 1980s saw three adaptations of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, all of which took experimental, modernistic or more challenging forms.

On 14 July 1983, Paul Corfield Godfrey's opera *Arcturus* was premiered by the New Celtic Opera at the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff; a second performance took place on the 16th. Many of Godfrey's compositions are based on Tolkien's works, which is presumably how he came to Lindsay's novel. The opera consists of four sequences (the séance, Maskull's awakening on Tormance, the entry into Sant with Spadevil, and Maskull's transformation into Nightspore) separated by four purely orchestral "visions" ("Starkness",

"Joiwind", "Wombflash" and "Muspel") which, as Godfrey says in his notes on the work, probe "the meaning of the action—visions of pain, love, death and finally rebirth".[288] The reviewer for *Opera* (October 1983, p. 1150–1152), Kenneth Loveland, found the production too experimental ("Why should Tydomin look like a fugitive from the Ring? Why did Maskull have to die sitting upright in a bath? Why did Gangnet have to float in on a scooter when the stage directions specified a boat?"). Godfrey himself seems to have agreed, saying in a later interview that the novel's plot was "complex enough in its own right, and the addition of layers of 'interpretation' by the producer served only to make the story-line incomprehensible to most of the audience."[289]

A second classical work, this time one that was never performed, was an oratorio, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, by English pianist and composer John Ogdon (1937–1989) in 1984. In his biography of Ogdon, Charles Beauclerk says, of this work:

> From Ogdon's notes and adaptation it is clear that he saw the novel as a religious work, and… has woven in quotations from the Old and New Testaments. He transforms Oceaxe, a wild woman with three eyes and three arms, into Oceania, to whom he then applies the description from Book 12 of Revelation of "a woman cloth'd with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars".[290]

The score of Ogdon's work, lodged in the archives of the Royal Northern College of Music, is incomplete, so it's unlikely ever to be performed.

Premiering on 28 September 1985, the Los Angeles-based Odyssey Theatre Ensemble put on a three-hour stage adaptation of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, featuring a cast of sixteen actors, presented on a U-shaped stage. The script was by David Wolpe. The part of Maskull, intriguingly, was played by several actors—a different one for each scene—while Nightspore was played by a woman (a decision echoed by Phil Moore in his 2019 musical version of the novel, where the character was renamed Seraphina). Interviewed about the production, director Ron Sossi stressed its experimental nature, and discussed

the story's meaning:

> The idea is there's this part of you—call it the ego—that's walking around, with a sole aim: gratification—and that the process of following those desires keeps who you really are from emerging. Your soul, your spirit, is asleep. Finally, the outer self will let itself die, as a caterpillar does so that a butterfly can be born. This book says, "We're so involved in maintaining our caterpillarness that there are very few butterflies around."[291]

Although he goes on to say this isn't an idea specifically relevant to the 1980s (for which he'd need "South Africa or AIDS or nuclear annihilation"), his summation of the core theme as "Letting go of our Porsches and our stereo systems" does, in retrospect, seem entirely relevant to the greed-is-good materialism of the time.

The reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times* (2 October 1985, p. 67), Sylvia Drake, after saying the novel itself was a "'Martian Chronicles' of the soul and a 'Peer Gynt' of inner space", and praising many aspects of the production, thought that, in the end, the novel was perhaps not stage material:

> The theater is so strongly presentational and this novel so elusive and broad that it may not tolerate the constrictions.

A reviewer for *L. A. Weekly* (7 November 1985, p. 121), after opening with "There must be some really bad acid going around", concluded:

> To be fair, the text is full of arresting imagery… and the 16-member ensemble play off each other very well. In the end, though… the whole thing is likely to be just a lot of people in diaphanous costumes poncing about a bare stage for too long.

(It's possible an earlier Odyssey Theatre production of *Arcturus* was planned or perhaps even performed, as there is an 1980 advert for the show as part of an upcoming season, but no reviews I've been able to find.)

Musical Interpretations

Because of its spacey title, a number of (often improvised) pieces of music have been titled *A Voyage to Arcturus*, including instrumentals by Rod Wallace (1982), Kewpie Forest (sometime in the 1990s), Steve Mackay and the Radon Ensemble (2006), Tarwater (2012), Chris Zippel (2012), Dead Dragon Mountain (2015), The Gateless Gate (2020), mindatlarge (2020), and "The Interplanetary Voyage to Arcturus" (1985) by Paul Warner, in a variety of styles from New Age to rock to electronic. How many of these were named "Voyage to Arcturus" because the title appealed is impossible to tell.

Other tracks take names from the novel, such as "Joiwind" from French band Neo (1980), "Swaylone's Isle" from a live concert recording by the Dennis Rea Tanabata Ensemble (2016), and "The Séance/Search for Muspel-Light" by Circle/Temple on the anthology album *From The Furthest Signals* (2017), which includes a brief quote from the novel's opening chapter. David Power's "Matterplay" (2012), part of his Six Electronic Pieces suite, was later incorporated by Italian rock band Malenky Slovos into their own song of the same name in 2016. (Power's compositional work has included setting poems by E. H. Visiak to music, and in 1991 Pauper's Press published his monograph *David Lindsay's Vision*.)

There have also been extended musical adaptations of Lindsay's novel. Ron Thomas, who studied under Karlheinz Stockhausen before discovering modern jazz, recorded the album *Scenes from A Voyage to Arcturus* (released in 2001), with track titles such as "The Music of Swaylone's Island", "The Murder of Spadevil and Tydomin" and "The Starkness Observatory and the Night of Departure". The instrumentation includes piano, keyboard, synthesiser, drums, trumpet and saxophone, with a distinctly modern, atonal feel throughout.

Henry Kaiser's *The Seance* (1996) is an album of fifteen tracks, played by a guitar, cello and koto trio, with occasional percussion. The track titles are taken from Lindsay's chapter titles and have a sparse, often dissonant sound.

The most extended purely musical treatment of Lindsay's novel so far has been a triple-disc release from Ukranian "house mystic" Mikhaylo Vityk, recording as Vakula. Described as "a soundtrack to the novel",[292] this *A*

Voyage to Arcturus has sixteen tracks and a playtime of about an hour and a half. It uses a wide variety of instruments, creating a varied texture throughout the album, including sampled, synthesised and traditional keyboards, drums and percussion, wordless vocals and electric guitar. The overall feel is of a work as influenced by various forms of psychedelic music (from 60s rock to acid-house) as it is by Lindsay's novel.

Prestige Editions and *A Christmas Play*

The twenty-first century saw a rise in prestige editions of classic works of fantasy, horror, and weird fiction—beautifully produced hardbacks, often including supplemental material—and, with the Lindsay revival of the 1970s now far enough behind that even republished editions were becoming scarce once more, Lindsay's novels were perfect candidates for the same treatment.

In 2002, *A Voyage to Arcturus* was published in a limited edition gilt-edged hardback from Savoy Books, designed by John Coulthart, and featuring a wealth of additions, including a new introduction by Alan Moore ("Prism and Pentecost: David Lindsay and the British Apocalypse") that placed the novel in the visionary tradition of English-language fiction alongside Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and William Hope Hodgson's *Night Land* and *The House on the Borderland*. Also included in the volume were an updated version of Colin Wilson's "Haunted Man" essay that had originally appeared in *The Strange Genius*, plus all of the previously-printed selections from Lindsay's philosophical aphorisms, two photographs of Lindsay, and a facsimile of a handwritten letter from Lindsay to Robert Barnes on the endpapers. The cover, a reproduction of "The Treasures of Satan" by the Symbolist/occult artist Jean Delville, was particularly apt, as Delville had also provided the cover artwork for the composer Scriabin's *Prométhée—Poème du feu* (Scriabin being mentioned in *Arcturus*'s first chapter, and the Prometheus myth later in the novel)—apt enough for Gollancz to use the same artwork when they reissued the novel in paperback the following year, as number 37 in their Fantasy Masterworks series.

In 2004, *The Haunted Woman* was issued in a high-quality hardback from

Tartarus Press, with an afterword by Tolkien scholar Douglas A. Anderson. Anderson has made a number of significant contributions to Lindsay scholarship, one of the most notable being the first publication of Lindsay's "Christmas Play" in his 2003 anthology *Tales Before Tolkien: The Roots of Modern Fantasy*.

In 2015, all of Lindsay's works that had been published in his own lifetime went into the public domain in most countries. The text of *A Voyage to Arcturus* had already been uploaded to the online library Project Gutenberg in May 1998, meaning it was easily republishable by anyone using the now prevalent mass-market self-publishing tools. As a result, *Arcturus* began to receive innumerable new editions, almost all of which had no care taken over their interior design or choice of cover. In addition, the source text at Project Gutenberg was the edited US version of the novel from 1964, meaning this flood of new paperback editions weren't using the authentic text. But *Arcturus* would, nevertheless, continue to receive some proper editions, including a 2022 prestige edition from Beehive Books (illustrated by psychedelic artist Jim Woodring), and—something of a mark of having arrived as a classic work of literature—a Penguin Classics paperback in 2021.

Arcturus also received a number of new translations around this time, including into Russian (1993), Bulgarian (1999), Catalan (2012), Greek (2016), Romanian (2016), Spanish (2016), Turkish (2016), Serbian (2018), Korean (2020), Finnish (2021), Icelandic (2021) and Italian (2023). *The Haunted Woman*, meanwhile, received a Russian translation in 2001, a new Japanese translation in 2013, and a Turkish translation in 2019. Lindsay's other novels, now quite rare and commanding high prices even for reissues, received English-language paperback editions, too: *Sphinx* in 2018 (from Nodens Books), and *Devil's Tor* and *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* in 2017 (from Bookship).

The first audiobook of *A Voyage to Arcturus* was made available in 2009, from Rafi Metz, and more would follow, including one from Penguin Books in 2021. A reading of *The Haunted Woman*, meanwhile, was broadcast in eleven parts on Brighton & Hove Community Radio, thanks to Janina Karpinska and Alan J. Cannon.

It was because *A Voyage to Arcturus* was now in the public domain that it received what was perhaps its most surprising adaptation yet. Looking for

something that would be both a challenge to adapt and provide scope for reinterpretation, composer and writer Phil Moore chose Lindsay's novel to turn into a "Heavy-Metal Steampunk Sci-Fi Musical". Featuring thirty five songs, and running to almost three hours, it received its first stage performances in 2019 at the Peninsula Theatre, Woy Woy, in New South Wales. Where most adaptations of the novel were highly selective of which of the many episodes to include or exclude, this musical adaptation managed to pack in the majority, though at the same time diverged sufficiently from Lindsay's ideas to take the story into a far more explicitly affirmative take on life. Whereas, in Lindsay, Crystalman's world is "*rotten* with illusion from top to bottom",[293] in Moore's musical—which has no equivalent of the Crystalman character—it's the differences between people, enforced by their circumstances and world-view, that are the illusion, leading to, ultimately, a celebration of life's variety rather than a need to escape its deceptions.

The Centenary

A Voyage to Arcturus's centenary year, 2020, was marked by two events, both held online due to the pandemic. The University of Glasgow's Centre for Fantasy and the Fantastic presented their "Event to Celebrate the Centenary of David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*" on 19 November, featuring talks from Douglas A. Anderson, Professor Robert Davis, and novelist Nina Allan (who had named one of the sections of her 2017 novel *The Rift*, "A Voyage to Arcturus"). And then, on 9 December, Edinburgh's Scottish Storytelling Centre hosted "*A Voyage to Arcturus* and Beyond: David Lindsay's Visionary Imagination", whose contributors included Dr J. Derrick McClure, Dr Louise Milne, Dr Steven Sutcliffe, Dr Andrew Radford, Dr John Herdman, Jan Pick (daughter-in-law of J. B. Pick), Douglas A. Anderson, David Power, Seán Martin, and myself.

And, although it missed the centenary year, Seán Martin's essay-documentary about David Lindsay, *A Vast Shadow House*, has to be mentioned. Featuring interviews with Harold Bloom, Alan Moore, Brian Stableford, Gary Lachman, Gavin Wraith, Bernard Sellin, Stuart Kelly, Douglas A. Anderson, Derek J. McClure, Gary K. Wolfe, Steven Sutcliffe,

John Herdman, David Power, and myself, as well as readings from Lindsay's work against evocative landscape shots, it had its world premiere at the Maine International Film Festival on 12 July 2022.

If Lindsay's remark that "as long as even two or three people will listen to Beethoven, two or three people will read [*A Voyage to Arcturus*]" has proved inaccurate, it has, fortunately, been through underestimation. What is evident from both its initial reviews and the above survey of its fortunes following Lindsay's death, is that *Arcturus* will never be universally appreciated—rather, it falls into that interesting category of a work that, whether in its original form or in adaptation, rarely leaves it readership indifferent. Some will take to it and proclaim it a work of genius or at least of considerable power, others will be unmoved. (Still others will hate it, or at least be made uncomfortable enough to feel the need to mock it, belittle it, or explain it away, which only underlines its power as a work of literature.) But it has, undeniably, endured, and so has surely earned acknowledgement as a classic.

In 2005, online magazine The List named *A Voyage to Arcturus* one of the "100 Best Scottish Books of All Time"; in 2008, Surtur was number 37 in *The Daily Telegraph*'s list of the "50 Greatest Villains in Literature". In 2024, highbrow knowledge quiz *University Challenge* asked its contestants "a 1920 novel by the Scottish author David Lindsay is entitled *A Voyage To* which star?" And the novel continues to have its key supporters: the role in its early literary life played by C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, and which passed onto Colin Wilson, was taken up by Philip Pullman and Alan Moore as the twentieth century passed into the twenty-first: both have mentioned it, even if just in passing, as a notable work of fantastic fiction.

It's an essential quality of any classic that it continues to speak to new generations in new ways. *A Voyage to Arcturus* found new twenty-first century relevance in its distinctly unique attitude to gender (in 1999, Suzanne Romaine highlighted *Arcturus* as a key early work that coined a new gender pronoun for the phaen Leehallfae;[294] and, perhaps more poignantly, a 1965 issue of the US transvestite magazine *Transvestia* called Panawe's story in the novel "one of the most enlightened and beautiful presentations of the essence of the phenomenon that possesses" that magazine's readership[295]).

Meanwhile, its adaptation by Phil Moore into a work intended for a far broader audience, and with a quite different core message, proves *A Voyage to Arcturus* to be a rich work open to creative interpretation, rather than a vehicle for its author's own thought alone—surely the mark of a potentially enduring and adaptable classic.

A Voyage to Arcturus will never be a much-loved work along the lines of Dickens or Austen, but it will continue to speak to its own, smaller but significant, readership—one that will continue to be shocked, surprised, inspired, offended, invigorated or fulfilled by its unique, often dark vivacity and wild imagination.

Timeline

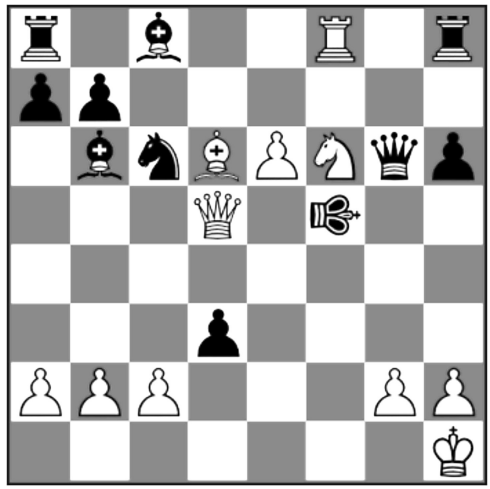
1868	1 October	Marriage of Alexander Lindsay and Elizabeth Bellamy, David's parents (p. 15)
1869	24 July	Birth of brother, Alexander Lindsay (p. 21)
1873	14 August	Birth of sister, Margaret Lindsay (p. 21)
1876	3 March	David Lindsay born (p. 21)
1885	May	Starts at Colfe's Grammar School (p. 24)
1888	17 April	Father Alexander goes missing after leaving work (p. 29); it later turns out he emigrated to Canada (p. 30)
1890	December	Leaves Colfe's Grammar School (p. 32)
1891	—	Starts work around this time, initially as a clerk in a newspaper office, later working for insurance underwriters Price Forbes (p. 35)
1895	25 February	Death of uncle Theodore Couchman (p. 39)
	16 December	Brother Alexander marries Florence Lucy Peacock (p. 40)
1896	—	David, his mother, and his sister, move in with their widowed aunt Mildred Couchman next door, at 7 Blackheath Rise (later renumbered 17) (p. 41)
1899	17 March	Has a chess game printed in Samuel Tinsley's chess column (p. 44)
1900	—	Becomes engaged to his Scottish cousin Jessie Elizabeth Barbara Hilson (p. 46)
1902	—	Submits a novel, *Aletheus* or *Altheus* to publishers, unsuccessfully (p. 45)
1904	October	Brother Alexander is declared bankrupt (p. 47)

1908	—	Submits a novel, *The Confessions of an Egoist*, to publishers, unsuccessfully (p. 45)
1911	May	Brother Alexander, writing as Alexander Crawford, has his first novel, *Kapak*, published (p. 52)
1915	4 September	Death of brother Alexander (p. 55)
1916	2 March	Conscripted into "General Service" in the war (p. 58)
	18 October	Called up into the Grenadier Guards at Caterham (p. 59)
	21 December	Marries Jacqueline Silver (p. 60)
1918	23 January	Promoted to Unpaid Lance Corporal (p. 68)
	—	David and Jacqueline move to 8 Park Drive, Golders Green (p. 67), then to Ruberslaw, Finchley Road (p. 68)
	12 October	Promoted to Unpaid Corporal (p. 68)
1919	25 February	Demobilised from the army (p. 69)
	—	The couple seek a place to live, and end up in Lynscott, Porth in Cornwall (p. 70)
	April	Begins writing *A Voyage to Arcturus* (p. 71)
	2 October	First daughter, Diana, born (p. 71)
1920	March	Finishes writing *A Voyage to Arcturus* (p. 71); starts *The Haunted Woman* soon after (p. 79)
	September	*A Voyage to Arcturus* published (p. 73)
1921	April	Finishes writing *The Haunted Woman* (p. 80)
	6 July	Jacqueline and Diana on trip to New York (p. 83)
	August	Begins writing *Sphinx* (p. 93)
	30 August	*The Haunted Woman* begins serialisation in *The Daily News* (p. 83)
	20 September	Jacqueline and Diana return from New York (p. 83)
	23 September	*The Haunted Woman* serialisation concludes (p. 83)
	October	Methuen accept *The Haunted Woman* for publication (p. 88)
	6 October	Begins correspondence with E. H. Visiak (p. 85); around this time, first meets Robert H. Barnes (p. 87)
1922	February	*The Haunted Woman* published (p. 88)
	March	Finishes *Sphinx*, revises it until May (p. 93)

	June	Abandons first attempt at *The Ancient Tragedy*, works on it again in July and October (p. 101)
	October	Starts *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* (p. 101)
	1 November	Second daughter, Helen, born (p. 97)
1923	April	*Sphinx* accepted by publisher John Long (p. 97)
	May	Finishes writing *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* (p. 102)
	June	Returns to working on *The Ancient Tragedy*, finishing it in October (p. 101)
	November	*Sphinx* published (p. 98)
1924	January	By this point, the Lindsays had moved from Lynscott to Trevelgue House (p. 97); Jonathan Cape offer to put out a book of short stories by David, but it comes to nothing (p. 101)
	February	Starts writing *The Violet Apple* (p. 102)
	July	Finishes *The Violet Apple* (p. 102)
	September	Jacqueline and Diana on second trip to New York, with Helen (p. 104)
1925	January	Jacqueline and the girls return from New York (p. 104)
	March	Revises *The Violet Apple* (p. 102)
	September	Receives letter from L. H. Myers which begins their friendship (p. 105)
1926	February	*The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* accepted by Melrose (p. 107); finishes further revision of *The Violet Apple* (p. 102)
	21 May	Aunt Mildred Couchman dies, leaving David £1,000 (p. 107)
	October	*The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly* published in Britain (p. 108)
1927	March	*A Blade for Sale* published in the US (p. 108)
	5 November	Jacqueline's mother dies (p. 108)
1928	—	Starts work on *Devil's Tor* (p. 113)
	—	The Lindsays move to Greenways, Ferring (p. 112)
	31 May	Mother, Bessy, dies (p. 108)
1929	10 September	Meets Victor Gollancz for the first time (p. 113)

	October	Move to Meadowbank, Ferring (p. 112)
1932	5 January	*Devil's Tor* accepted by Putnam (p. 122); soon after, begins writing *The Witch* (p. 137)
	April	*Devil's Tor* published (p. 123)
	September	Second meeting with Victor Gollancz (p. 114)
1933	May	A new wing is added to Meadowbank (p. 141)
	17 November	Jacqueline and David's sister Margaret go on a trip to Madeira; Jacqueline returns on 18 December (p. 141)
1934	December	By this point, has finished first version of *The Witch*, and it has been rejected by Gollancz (p. 138)
1937	August	Worthing High School for Girls go on trip to Germany (p. 143)
1938	—	The Lindsays move to Pembroke Crescent, Hove (p. 146)
1940	29 June	Diana marries Harold Gordon Moon (p. 148)
	15 July	German bombs fall on Pembroke Crescent, injuring David (p. 148)
1941	3 October	David's first grandchild born (p. 148)
1944	17 June	David's second grandchild born (p. 149)
1945	16 July	David Lindsay dies (p. 151)
	19 July	Buried at Mill Lane Cemetery, Shoreham (p. 151)

David Lindsay's Chess Game



On 17 March 1899, the regular Friday chess column of *The Kentish Mercury* included the following item:

> We are indebted to Mr. D. Lindsay, of Blackheath-rise, for the following game. "It was played by two amateurs, and appears to be a variation of the Jerome Gambit." :—

	White	Black
1	P—K 4	P—K 4
2	Kt—K B 3	Kt—Q B 3
3	B—B 4	B—B 4
4	P—Q 4	P x P
5	B x P ch *(a)*	K x B
6	Kt—Kt 5 ch	K—K sq
7	Q—B 3	Q—K 2 *(b)*

8	Castles	Kt—K 4
9	Q—Q Kt 3	P—K R 3
10	Kt—R 7	P—K Kt 3
11	P—K B 4	P—Q 6 dis ch
12	K—R sq	Kt—Kt 5
13	P—B 5	Q x Kt
14	P x P	Q x P
15	Kt—B 3	Q—R 4
16	B—B 4	Kt—B 7 ch
17	R x Kt	B x R
18	R—K B sq	B—Q 5
19	Kt—Q 5	B—Kt 3
20	B x P	P—Q 3
21	B x P	Q—Kt 3
22	R—B 8 ch *(c)*	K—Q 2
23	P—K 5	Kt—K 2
24	Q—Kt 5 ch	Kt—B 3
25	Kt—B 6 ch	K—K 3
26	Q—Q 5 ch	K—B 4
27	P—K 6 dis ch	Resigns

S. Tinsley, the column compiler, added the following notes:

(a) It is interesting to meet with these variations from the ordinary dull methods. But this line of play cannot be commended.

(b) If now Q—R 3 all White's attack (?) vanishes. Black might even play Kt—K 4 at once.

(c) Much easier and simpler was 22 Q—Kt 5 ch, and mate in two moves.

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Notes

1. Gary K. Wolfe, review of *The Life and Works of David Lindsay* in *Foundation* #24 (February 1982), p. 104.
2. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter II, p. 21.
3. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XVII, p. 207.
4. George MacDonald, *Phantastes*, Chapter XVIII.
5. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XX, p. 258.
6. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 3.
7. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 8.
8. Victor Gollancz, letter to Colin Wilson, 7 August 1964, quoted in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 235.
9. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 10.
10. Visiak, "Lindsay as I knew him", in *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*, p. 97.
11. Pick, "Sketch", in *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*, p. 11.
12. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XX, p. 244.
13. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 4.
14. Also spelled Newdusk, Newdosk, Neudos, and New Dosk.
15. Andrew Jervise, *The Land of the Lindsays*, p. 20.
16. "Death of Mr Robert Lindsay", *The Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 26 February 1884, p. 4.
17. "Deaths", *John O'Groat Journal*, 27 January 1843, p. 3.
18. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 15.
19. "Charge of Felony Against a Surgeon", *The Examiner*, 29 August 1846, p. 554.
20. *Westminster Gazette*, 27 September 1927, p. 12.
21. *Kentish Mercury*, 27 April 1878, p. 4.
22. *Woolwich Gazette*, 25 December 1885, p. 1.
23. *Kentish Mercury*, 10 July 1885, p. 5.
24. *Kentish Mercury*, 21 June 1889, p. 5.
25. *Kentish Mercury*, 4 December 1885, p. 4.
26. Henry Williamson, *The Beautiful Years*, p. 161–2.

27. "Potted Biographies of Past Colfe Masters", *The Colfeian* No. 57 (1934), p. 41.
28. "Hookey" by JPE, *The Colfeian*, No: 72 (July 1949), p. 16.
29. *Oxfordshire Weekly News*, 11 January 1882, p. 2.
30. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 9.
31. Pick, "Sketch", p. 11.
32. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 9.
33. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 246, note 27.
34. Quoted in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 197.
35. *Berwick Advertiser*, 12 August 1887, p. 2.
36. *Jedburgh Gazette*, 1 April 1882, p. 2.
37. Pick, *The Great Shadow House*, p. 74–5.
38. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XV, p. 162.
39. Pick, "Sketch", p. 7.
40. Pick, "Sketch", p. 7.
41. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 13.
42. *And at Lloyd's*, p. 25.
43. Visiak, "Lindsay as I knew him", *Strange Genius*, p. 98
44. Lindsay, letter to Robert Barnes, dated 25 February (no year), National Library of Scotland.
45. Lindsay, *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*, Chapter VII, p. 77.
46. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 10 December 1935, *Adam International*, p. 64.
47. *The Colonies and India*, 2 March 1895, p. 38, and *The Kentish Mercury*, 1 March 1895, p. 6.
48. Blackheath Rise would expand, and the houses would be renumbered, so number 7 would become number 17 by the time of the 1911 census.
49. *Western Morning News*, 16 December 1895, p. 3.
50. Pick, "Sketch", p. 9.
51. Most records give his and his brothers' surname as "Fitzhenry", but on his grave it's "Fitz-Henry", so this is presumably how he would have written it.
52. *The Kentish Mercury*, 17 March 1899, p. 2.
53. *The Kentish Mercury*, 27 September 1901, p. 2.
54. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 16.
55. Gunnell, "Translator's Preface", in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. xxii.
56. The papers actually record that the delegate for Lewisham was one L. Lindsay, but as club matches report David as the only Lindsay playing (and Alexander was by this point in Birmingham), it seems fair to assume this is David and the "L" is a misprint.
57. Mark Valentine, "Before Arcturus: David Lindsay's Lost Novels".

58. *Birmingham Mail*, 21 December 1904, p. 3, "Unsuccessful Company Promoting".
59. *Birmingham Mail*, 24 November 1904, p. 2, "Companies That Failed".
60. As an author, his first name would be spelled Sydney, but in the press at the time of Alexander's trial (and contemporary censuses) his first name was spelled Sidney, so I will use that spelling here.
61. This interaction isn't part of Alexander's bankruptcy hearing, but another hearing involving Sidney Fowler Wright and a different firm's bankruptcy—but it is also one in which a "Mr Lindsay" crops up, having signed an option to float the said company.
62. "Bankrupt as Pawn", *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 23 February 1905, p. 2.
63. "Birmingham Chairmaker's Bankruptcy", *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 22 February 1905, p. 3.
64. "Fateful Guarantee", *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 19 January 1905, p. 3.
65. "Unsuccessful Company Promoting", *Birmingham Mail*, 21 December 1904, p. 3.
66. "Bankrupt as Pawn", *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 23 February 1905, p. 2.
67. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 14.
68. Pick, "Sketch", p. 7.
69. *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 29 April 1914, p. 2.
70. *The Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette*, 29 April 1913, p. 4.
71. *The Colfeian* (June 1911), p. 73.
72. Republished in *Wormwood* 11 (Autumn 2008), by Douglas A. Anderson.
73. *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1913, p. 6, and *The Scotsman*, 28 April 1913, p. 2.
74. *The Scotsman*, 25 May 1911, p. 2.
75. *The Manchester Courier*, 24 May 1911, p. 11; *The Liverpool Daily Post and Liverpool Mercury*, 14 June 1911, p. 11; *The Globe*, 9 June 1911, p. 7.
76. *The Observer*, 28 May 1911, p. 5; *The Globe*, 25 October 1912, p. 7; *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 April 1913, p. 5.
77. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 April 1913, p. 5.
78. *The Times*, 16 March 1914, p. 6; *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 15 August 1913, p. 4; *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 29 April 1914, p. 2.
79. *The Scotsman*, 23 March 1913, p. 2.
80. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 14.
81. Although Ladywell is a large cemetery, the Couchman monument is not hard to find: it's one of the first monuments along the leftmost path at the Cemetery's eastern entrance (off Ladywell Road), its pinkish stone and tall cross making it easy to spot.

82. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 9 November 1921, *Adam International*, p. 43.
83. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 13.
84. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 15.
85. See Bibliography: Documents for details of the surviving war records.
86. Pick, "Sketch", p. 10.
87. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 18.
88. Lindsay, "Sketch Notes", number 456, (*A Voyage to Arcturus*, Savoy Books, p. 397).
89. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 18.
90. These details from the physical description recorded at Ellis Island when Jacqueline entered the US on two separate occasions, which give different eye colours and heights (either 5 feet 5 inches, or 5 feet 8 inches).
91. Pick, "Sketch", p. 10.
92. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p.19.
93. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 19.
94. Quoted in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 45–6.
95. *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XXI, p. 264.
96. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 12 November 1921, *Adam International*, p. 46.
97. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 11.
98. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 20.
99. Pick, "Sketch", p. 10.
100. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 18.
101. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 19.
102. Pick, *The Great Shadow House*, p. 75.
103. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 13.
104. Pick, *The Great Shadow House*, p. 75.
105. *Hendon & Finchley Times*, 27 January 1922, p. 2.
106. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 21.
107. Pick, "Sketch", p. 10–11.
108. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 22.
109. Meredith, *The Literary Year-Book* (1922), p. 404.
110. In the words of prosecutor H. Muskett, as quoted in *The Manchester Courier*, 15 November 1915, p. 6.
111. *Heart of Darkness* was published by Blackwood (Alexander Lindsay's publisher) before Conrad made the move to Methuen (in 1907); *A Princess of Mars* was published by Methuen in April 1919.
112. *The Daily News*, 21 April 1919, p. 6.
113. *The Daily News*, 29 June 1944, p. 2.

114. Lynd, *Old and New Masters*, p. 12.
115. *The Times*, 17 September 1920, p. 11.
116. *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 13 October 1920, p. 4. Both Eric Rabkin ("Conflation of Genres and Myths in David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*") and Harold Bloom (*Agon*, p. 200) would later echo the Lewis Carroll comparison.
117. See Douglas A. Anderson, *A Shiver in the Archive*s blog, "A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS: A Review 'to make the gorge rise'", http://ashiverinthearchives.blogspot.com/2017/08/a-voyage-to-arcturus-review-to-make.html
118. *Devil's Tor*, Chapter XI, p. 167.
119. Ralph Straus (1882–1950) had written his own piece of proto-SF, *The Dust Which is God: An Undimensional Adventure* (1907).
120. Lindsay, letter to Visiak, 6 January 1924, *Adam*, p. 51.
121. Taylor, *The Prose Factory*, p. 142.
122. *The Daily News*, 27 August 1921, p. 5.
123. *The Daily News*, 29 August 1921, p. 5.
124. Smith, Curran and Wingate, *Impacts and Influences: Media Power in the Twentieth Century*, p. 29.
125. Visiak, "Discovering a Genius", *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay*, p. 95.
126. The letter, as published in *Adam International* (p. 40), is dated 6.11.1921, but subsequent letters are dated October, so presumably the first letter was supposed to be 6 October 1921.
127. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 6 November 1921, *Adam International*, p. 40.
128. "Captain Gunn (After E. H. Visiak)", *Punch*, 30 December 1925, p. 702, a pirate-themed poem.
129. These artworks are currently in a private collection.
130. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 21 October 1921, *Adam International*, p. 41.
131. This account comes mostly from Pick ("Sketch" p. 17), who goes to some length to emphasise the difficulty David had in the writing; Sellin, on the other hand (*Life & Works*, p. 27), says the novel was written "quite quickly between April 1921 and January 1922".
132. Lindsay, *Sphinx*, Chapter II, p. 31.
133. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter II, p. 20.
134. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 9.
135. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter I, p. 9.
136. Lindsay, *The Haunted Woman*, Chapter XV, p. 141.
137. Lindsay, *The Violet Apple*, Chapter X, both quotes p. 202.

138. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 9 February 1922, *Adam International*, p. 46–7.
139. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 9 May 1922, *Adam International*, p. 48.
140. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 9 May 1922, *Adam International*, p. 48.
141. Mark Meredith, *Who's Who in Literature: 1926 Edition*, p. vii.
142. *The Leeds Mercury*, 28 December 1923, p. 5.
143. *The Fielding Star* (New Zealand), 16 July 1924, p. 6.
144. *The Otago Witness*, 22 July 1924, p. 66.
145. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 6 January 1924, *Adam International*, p. 52.
146. Pick, "Sketch", p. 19.
147. Lindsay, *The Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly*, Chapter VI, p. 65.
148. Pick, "Sketch", p. 18–19.
149. *The Violet Apple*, Chapter 12, p. 244.
150. Seán Martin, "A vast shadow house: Critical and creative responses to David Lindsay's vision", p. 115–177.
151. Pick, "Sketch", p. 19.
152. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 20.
153. Frances Partridge, *Love in Bloomsbury*, p. 133.
154. Sellin (p. 40) says Myers' club was The Cranium, but this was the name given to a monthly dinner given by the Bloomsbury Group, rather than a gentleman's club.
155. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 17 October 1929, *Adam International*, p. 54.
156. *The Times*, 7 November 1928, p. 18.
157. Meredith, *Literary Year Book* (1922), p. 404.
158. Most of this information from "David Lindsay 1876–1945" by David Garnett in *Ferring History Magazine* (2018), p. 3.
159. Pick, "Sketch", p. 22.
160. Pick, "Sketch", p. 21.
161. Mark Valentine, "Before Arcturus: David Lindsay's Lost Novels".
162. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 11 September 1929, *Adam International*, p. 52.
163. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 18 October 1962, *Adam International*, p. 67.
164. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 16 September 1932, *Adam International*, p. 61.
165. Quoted by Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 31.
166. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 20 September 1929, *Adam International*, p. 52–3.
167. It's where he is in the 1921 census.
168. Pick, "Sketch", p. 23.
169. "Birmingham has a new 'theatre'", *The Birmingham Mail*, 18 August 1951, p. 3.
170. Letter from David Lindsay to Peter Judge, dated 6 December 1934, in private

hands.

171. E. H. Visiak, "Lindsay As I Knew Him", *Strange Genius*, p. 97.
172. All quotes in this paragraph E. H. Visiak, "Lindsay As I Knew Him", *Strange Genius*, p. 97.
173. E. H. Visiak, "Lindsay As I Knew Him", *Strange Genius,* p. 100.
174. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter II, p. 23.
175. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter X, p. 98.
176. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XV, p. 168.
177. E. H. Visiak, letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 July 1963, p. 509.
178. E. H. Visiak, letter to *The Times Literary Supplement*, 4 December 1970, p. 1422.
179. E. H. Visiak, "Lindsay As I Knew Him", *Strange Genius*, p. 99–100.
180. Pick, *The Great Shadow House*, p. 76.
181. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 46.
182. *The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, 28 April 1927, p. 6.
183. Lindsay, "A Christmas Play", in *Tales Before Tolkien*, ed. Douglas A. Anderson, p. 408.
184. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter X, p. 101 and Chapter XII, p. 128.
185. Lindsay, "A Christmas Play", in *Tales Before Tolkien*, ed. Douglas A. Anderson, p. 397.
186. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 1 January 1937, *Adam International*, p. 65.
187. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 1 November 1929, *Adam International*, p. 55.
188. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 26 July 1931, *Adam International*, p. 58.
189. *Devil's Tor*, Chapter I, p. 17.
190. *Devil's Tor*, Chapter IX, p. 126.
191. *Devil's Tor*, Chapter IX, p. 134.
192. Quoted by Pick, "Sketch", p. 28.
193. Pick, "Sketch", p. 21.
194. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 22 November 1931, *Adam International*, p. 59. This actually has David saying he's "rather disappointed about Mrs. Arnold", but as this seems to be referring to a manuscript, I'm assuming "Mrs" is a mis-transcription of "Messrs".
195. Pick, "Sketch", p. 24.
196. Pick ("Sketch", p. 24), says the manuscript was sent to Putnam via Myers in November 1931, but a letter from David to Visiak (22 November 1931, *Adam International*, p. 58) says that Ragg wrote to David asking to see a portion of the book.
197. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 5 January 1932, *Adam International*, p. 59.

198. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 28, who suggests that the "artist and musician" is Robert Barnes.
199. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 27.
200. Pick, "Sketch", p. 25.
201. Pick, "Sketch", p. 29.
202. Adrian Wright, *Foreign Country: The Life of L. P. Hartley*, p. 80.
203. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 29.
204. Both quotes from Pick, "Sketch", p. 24.
205. The Putnam catalogue is described in a piece in *The Wanganui Chronicle* (New Zealand) for 30 April 1932, Supplement p. 2.
206. Hugh Cecil, *Clever Hearts: Desmond and Molly MacCarthy: A Biography*, p. 258
207. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 30.
208. Visiak, "Lindsay as I knew him", *Strange Genius*, p. 97.
209. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 237, note 35.
210. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 2 May 1933, *Adam International*, p. 62.
211. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 193.
212. Lindsay, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Chapter XVIII, p. 212.
213. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 25 October 1933, *Adam International*, p. 62.
214. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 6 December 1933, *Adam International*, p. 63.
215. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 10 December 1934, *Adam International*, p. 64.
216. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 11 June 1936, *Adam International*, p. 65.
217. *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, p. 257.
218. *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, p. 258.
219. *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, p. 270.
220. *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, p. 335.
221. *The Violet Apple & The Witch*, p. 331.
222. Lindsay, letter to Robert Barnes, dated 17 March, no year, held at the National Library of Scotland.
223. Lindsay, letter to E. H. Visiak, 30 March 1936, *Adam International*, p. 64.
224. *The Worthing Gazette*, 29 July 1936, p. 2.
225. Quoted in Pick, "Sketch", p. 21.
226. Lindsay, "Sketch Notes", number 483, (*A Voyage to Arcturus*, Savoy Books, p. 397).
227. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 43.
228. "Littlehampton Musician Off To Germany", *The Littlehampton Gazette*, 27 August 1937, p. 6.
229. Pick, "Sketch", p. 29.
230. Pick, "Sketch", p. 31.

231. Gunnell, "Translator's preface" to Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. xxi and p. xxii.
232. Gunnell, "Translator's preface", p. xxii.
233. Lindsay, letter to Robert Barnes, 6 August 1944, held at the National Library of Scotland.
234. "Hundreds Escape from Wrecked Bedrooms", *The Sussex Daily News*, 16 July 1940, p. 4.
235. Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 44.
236. Pick, "Sketch", p. 21.
237. Margaret Lindsay, letter to Robert Barnes, 2 September 1945, held at the National Library of Scotland.
238. Margaret Lindsay, letter to Florence Barnes (Robert's mother), dated 12 June (no year), held at the National Library of Scotland.
239. Kate Summerscale, *The Haunting of Alma Fielding*, p. 92.
240. The plot, located by Seán Martin, is unmarked.
241. Douglas A. Anderson, "David Lindsay: The Forging of a Literary Reputation", *Wormwood #36*, p. 56.
242. *John O'London's Weekly*, 8 March 1946, p. 236.
243. Quoted in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 245, note 1.
244. *The Times*, 1 September 1972, p. 24.
245. "Robert H. Barnes" (obituary), *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 July 1972, p. 21.
246. "Latest wills", *The Times*, 15 August 1986, p. 12.
247. "London Letter" in *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 June 1963, p. 6, which includes a short interview with Victor Gollancz.
248. From a letter to Victor Gollancz by Jacqueline Lindsay, quoted in Sellin, *Life & Works*, p. 237 (note 54).
249. C. S. Lewis, letter to Arthur Greeves, 7 December 1935, *Collected Letters Volume Two*, loc. 3538.
250. C. S. Lewis, letter to Roger Lancelyn Green, 28 December 1938, *Collected Letters Volume Two*, loc. 4911.
251. C. S. Lewis, letter to Charles A. Brady, 29 October 1944, *Collected Letters Volume Two*, loc. 12901.
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Index

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A

A. P. Watt, 96
Aberdeen, 17, 97
Aberdeen Press and Journal, The, 99, 109, 132
Abergavenny (Wales), 149
Aboriginal SF, 177
Adam International Review, 174
Adventure-story Magazine, 81
Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly, The, 7, 38, 114, 120, 175, 177
  publication, 107–108, 110, 190
  reviews, 109–111
  summary, 102–103
  writing, 102
Aeschylus, 162
Aletheus / Altheus, 45
Alexander III, Tsar, 63
Allan, Nina, 191
Allen, Herbert James Score, 87
Amazing Stories, 171
Amis, Kingsley, 166
  New Maps of Hell, 166
Analog (magazine), 167
Ancient Tragedy, The, 101–102, 113
Anderson, Douglas A., 190–191
  Tales Before Tolkien, 190
Andrew Melrose (publisher), 101, 107–109, 111
Anglo-German Academic Bureau, The, 143
Angus (Scotland), 15
Antisthenes, 38
  Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers, 38
Antwerp, 97
Arcturus (house), 171
Argus Bicycle Club Gazette, The, 40
Argus Bicycle Club, The, 40, 43
Argus, The (Melbourne), 156
Arizona Republic, The, 166
Army Dental Corps, 148
Army Pay Corps, 67–68
Arno Press, 175
Artists' General Benevolent Institution, 154
Ascham House Preparatory School, 86
Ashtead (Surrey), 42
Atheling, William, Jr. (James Blish), 171
Athenaeum, The, 90
Austen, Jane, 113, 193

B

Baker, G. P.
Sulla The Fortunate, 142
Ballantine Adult Fantasy series, 171
Ballantine Books, 165, 168, 174
Ballantine, Ian and Betty, 168
Balzac, Honoré de, 38
Chicot the Jester, 38
Dame de Monsoreau, La, 38
Droll Stories, 38
Barnes, Robert Henry, 10, 38, 61, 87–88, 108, 119, 121, 138, 141–142, 144, 149–150, 153–154, 189
Bates, H. E., 127–128
Darling Buds of May, The, 127
Bath (Somerset), 40
Battle of South Street, The, 144
Baudelaire, Charles, 74
BBC
"Books and Writers", 155
Voyage to Arcturus, A (dramatisation). see Voyage to Arcturus, adaptations
Beauclerk, Charles, 186
Beehive Books, 190
Beethoven, 38–39, 61, 88, 113–114, 142, 147, 150, 174, 192
Ninth Symphony, 122
Bell, Alexander Graham, 17
Bellamy, Thomas (grandfather), 19, 47
Bellamy/Stanford, Elizabeth (grandmother), 19–20
Bennett, Arnold, 72
Benson, E. F., 80
Besher, Alexander, 174
Bessarabia, 63
Bester, Alfred, 184
Bethnal Green, 65
Betts Street School, 65
Birmingham, 19, 47
Birmingham Mail, The, 49
Birmingham News, The (Alabama), 110
Blackheath, 21, 42, 87
Blackwood (publishers), 52
Blackwood, Algernon, 102
Blade for Sale, A. see Adventures of Monsieur de Mailly, The
Blake, Ian, 163
Blake, William, 38, 74, 88, 142, 163
Blish, James. see Atheling, William, Jr.
Bloom, Harold, 180–181, 191
Agon - Towards a Theory of Revisionism, 180
Flight to Lucifer, The, 180–181
Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, 180
Western Canon, The, 180–181
Bloomsbury Group, The, 106, 137
Boehme, Jacob, 37
Bois, William Pené du
Dr Ox's Experiment, 164
Bold, Alan, 179
Bonn, 143
Bookseller, The, 89
Bookship (publisher), 190
Boothby, Guy, 97
Botoşani (Romania), 63
Bournemouth, 41
Bradbury, Ray
Martian Chronicles, The, 187
Brady, Charles A., 166
Bramley, Reverend Thomas, 23, 25
Brasted (Kent), 66
Breadalbane, Earl of, 17
Brechin (Scotland), 16
Brecht, Bertolt, 162
Bridgnorth (Shropshire), 153
Brighton, 70, 146–147
Brighton & Hove Community Radio, 190
Brill, James Henry Clifford, 66
British Book News, 176
British Union of Fascists, The, 143
Brontë, Emily
Wuthering Heights, 38
Bronte, Miss (book reviewer), 156–157

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, The, 110
Broom, F. M., 66
Brophy, Brigid, 162
Brown, Dan, 130
Brown, John, 112
Buckland, John, 161
Budd, Charles Bentick, 143–144
Buffalo Evening News, The, 166
Bukovina, 63
Bull, E. J. King, 161
Bulldog, The, 86
Bulletin, The (Sydney), 164
Bullett, Gerald, 155
Bulwer-Lytton, Edward
  Zanoni, 125
Bunyan, John
  Pilgrim's Progress, 74, 177, 189
Burns Chronicle, The, 160
Burns, Robert, 16
Burroughs, Edgar Rice, 72–73, 157
  Princess of Mars, A, 72–73
Bystander, The, 78, 97

C

Cabell, James Branch, 110
  Jurgen, 110
Cadogan, Earl of, 18
Calvinism, 27, 29
Cambridge University Press, 178
Canada, 30–31, 43
Cane Hill Asylum, 87
Cannon, Alan J., 190
Canongate Classics, 161, 175
Cape, Herbert Jonathan, 101
Carlyle, Thomas, 38
Carroll & Graf, 175
Carroll, Lewis, 74, 164
  Alice in Wonderland, 177
Caterham, 59, 62, 66
Caterham Mental Hospital, 59
Cavendish, Margaret
  Blazing World, The, 189
Central London Recruiting Depot, 59
Centre for Fantasy and the Fantastic, The, 191
Chambers, Robert W., 97
Champneys, Adelaide Mary, 75–76
Charles Price & Son, 35–36
Chatto and Windus, 45, 113
chess, 43
Chicago Review Press, The, 175
Chicago Review, The, 174
Christie, Agatha, 102
"Christmas Play", 118–119
  publication, 190
  summary, 118
  typescript, 174
Circle/Temple (band), 188
Civil & Military Gazette, The, 76, 78
Claridges, 106
Clarke, Arthur C., 184
Clement, Hal, 184
Cobden-Sanderson, Richard, 97, 101
Coburn, Mrs, 98
Colfe's Grammar School, 23–24, 26, 32–33, 40, 42, 44, 51, 122, 168
Colfeian, The, 51
Collins, Wilkie, 129
Confessions of an Egoist, The, 45, 71
Conklin, Groff, 182
Conrad, Joseph, 38, 72, 153
  Heart of Darkness, 72
Conway, Alphonse, 113
Corelli, Marie, 72, 80
Cornwall, 70, 86, 112, 152, 168
Couchman, Theodore (uncle), 20–22, 39, 41, 56, 69, 108
Couchman/Bellamy, Mildred (aunt), 19–21, 26, 39–40, 47–48, 57, 107, 117, 141
Coulthart, John, 189
Courtenay, Alexander F. V., 23–24, 32
Crawford, Alexander. see Lindsay, Alexander (brother)
Crawford, Earl of, 15

Crickhowell (Wales), 149
Crimean War, 59
Criterion (magazine), 97
Croydon, 108, 115
Curtis Brown (literary agents), 96

D

Daily Chronicle, The, 26
Daily News, The, 42, 47, 72, 76–77, 81, 85, 89, 96
  serials, 81, 84
Daily Telegraph, The, 90, 125, 192
Daily Telegraph, The (Sydney), 156–157
David II of Scotland, 15
Davidson, Avram, 167
Davis, Professor Robert, 191
de la Mare, Walter, 39, 42, 87
Dead Dragon Mountain (band), 188
Delaney, Samuel, 184
Dell, Ethel, 78
Delville, Jean, 189
Dennis Rea Tanabata Ensemble (band), 188
Devil's Tor, 7, 38–39, 57, 95, 101, 107, 114, 117–120, 122, 136–138, 141, 143, 173
  characters
    Colborne, Magnus, 120, 139
    Copping, Peter, 75, 87, 121
    Drapier, Hugh, 120–121
    Fleming, Ingrid, 118, 121
    Saltfleet, Henry, 118, 142
  David Lindsay on, 120
  promotion, 136–137
  publication, 121–123, 137, 175, 190
  rejections, 114
  reviews, 124–134
  settings
    Belhill, 70
  summary, 121
  writing, 113, 119
Devon and Exeter Gazette, The, 131
Dick, Philip K., 184
Dickens, Charles, 50, 174, 193
Dominion, The (New Zealand), 91
Dorset, 70
Dostoevsky, 38, 73
Doubleday, 96
Dowling, Ethel Mary, 117
Doyle, Arthur Conan, 72, 80
  Poison Belt, The, 164
Drake, Sylvia, 187
Dream of the Rood, The, 177
Drummond, Bulldog, 102
Duckworth (publisher), 101
Dumas, Alexandre, 38–39, 102, 109, 111
  Three Musketeers, The, 102
Dumfries, Earl of, 17
Dundee, 97
Dundee Courier, The, 100
Dunsany, Lord, 45, 122, 171

E

Earls Court (London), 67
Eco, Umberto, 130
Eddison, E. R., 168
Edinburgh, 15–17, 22, 97
Edinburgh Evening News, The, 77, 90
Edinburgh Gazette, The, 47
Edward Arnold (publisher), 121
Eiseley, Loren, 165, 169
Eliot, George, 113
Eliot, T. S., 97
  Waste Land, The, 124
Ellis Island, 62, 83
Ellison, Harlan, 182
Emerson, 38
Ena (surname unknown), 119
Enchanted Princess, The (play), 118–119
Endymion, 74
English, Henry, 89
Essays Presented to Charles Williams, 158
Etudes écossaises (periodical), 178
Evening Standard, The, 125, 127
Evening Sun, The (Baltimore), 111

Evers, Earl, 169
Ewing, Murray, 191–192
Extrapolation, 177
Eyre & Spottiswoode, 20

F

Falmouth, 70
Fane and Miller (company), 48
Fantasy & Science Fiction, 167
Farmer, Philip José, 182, 184
Fausset, Hugh I'Anson, 128–129
Ferdinand VII of Spain, 18
Ferdinand, Archduke Franz, 58
Ferring, 70, 112–113
Ferring Health School for Girls, The, 112
Festival of Britain, 115
Fisher Unwin (publisher), 101
Fitz-Henry brothers, 42–43
Fitz-Henry, Rowley Steavens Wykeham, 42–43
Fitz-Henry, William, 42–43
Fitz-Henry, Woodfield Duncombe Tighe, 42–43
FitzGerald, Edward
  Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, The, 37
Folkestone, 41
Foundation (periodical), 176, 179, 183
Foyster, John, 170

G

Galaxy Magazine, 182
Garnett, David, 106
  Lady into Fox, 101
Garnett, Edward, 101
Garnett, Richard
  Twilight of the Gods, 101
Gateless Gate, The (band), 188
Gei Oni (Palestine), 64
Genre (periodical), 178
German Romantics, 37–38
Glasgow, 97
Glasgow Herald, The, 73, 76, 130
Godfrey, Paul Corfield, 185–186
Godstone (Surrey), 60, 66
Goethe, 37
  Wilhelm Meister, 37
Gold, Arthur R., 166
Golders Green, 67–68
Golding, William, 162
Gollancz (publisher), 119–120, 139, 141, 153, 155, 157, 162, 168, 183, 189
  Connoisseur's Library of Strange Fiction, 155
  Fantasy Masterworks, 189
  Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction, 162
Gollancz, Victor, 9, 79, 102, 113–114, 120–121, 152, 155, 164, 168
Goulart, Ron, 170
Gould, Nat, 78, 97
Grant Richards (publisher), 96
Great Mother, 121, 131, 134
Green, Henry, 162
Green, Roger Lancelyn, 158
Greenwich, 15, 40, 87
Greeves, Arthur, 158
Grenadier Guards, 59
  Caterham depot, 59
Grey, Zane, 97
Grove, George, 39
  Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies, 39
Guardian, The, 74, 76, 128, 177
Gunnell, Kenneth, 45, 146–147, 178

H

Haggard, H. Rider, 38, 52, 80, 129
  She, 38
Haldeman, Joe, 184
Hamilton Place Academy, 17
Hammersmith, 18
Hampstead, 68, 115
Hartford Courant, The, 111
Hartley, L. P., 107, 126, 213
Harvey, Robert, 162

Haunted Woman, The, 7, 9, 37–38, 61, 83, 94–95, 97, 103–104, 113–115, 117, 121–122, 124, 132, 140–141, 144, 146, 152, 173, 178
characters
Judge, Henry, 80, 115
Loment, Isbel, 80, 83–84, 95
Stokes, Marshall, 83
publication, 88–89, 93, 155, 161, 164, 175, 189
audiobooks, 190
rejections, 80
reviews, 89–91, 157, 164
serialisation, 81, 83–85, 93
summary, 80
translations, 175, 190
writing, 80
Hawkins, Reverend Cambridge Victor, 85
Hegel, 37
Heinemann (publisher), 96
Herbert, Frank, 184
Herdman, Dr John, 191–192
Hereford, 148
Hergesheimer, Joseph
Limestone Tree, The, 39
Heuer, Kenneth, 165
Hiawatha (play), 118
Hight, G. A., 38
Hilson, James Lindsay (uncle), 27–28, 33, 46, 51, 69
Hilson, Jessie Elizabeth Barbara (cousin), 28, 46, 60–61, 69, 108
Hinchingbrooke Hospital, 154
Hither Green (Lewisham), 21, 26, 41–42
Hitler, 119, 142–143, 149
Hodgson, William Hope
Carnacki the Ghost-Finder, 102
House on the Borderland, The, 189
Night Land, The, 189
Holdsworth, Annie E.
Triumph of Love, The, 81
Holloway, William, 171. see also Voyage to Arcturus, adaptations, 1971 film
Hollywood, 97
Holmes, Sherlock, 102
Homer
Odyssey, The, 166
Hopkins, Bill, 167
Horsham, 115
Hotel Bella Vista (Madeira), 141
Hove, 57, 70, 145–147, 153
bombing raid on, 148
Huberman, Leo, 147
Hudson, W. H., 38, 113
Green Mansions, 38, 113
Hume, Kathryn, 178
Huntingdon (Cambridgeshire), 154
Huntington, Constant, 122, 136
Hutchinson (publisher), 80–81, 97, 107
Hutchinson, Sir George, 80

I

Ibsen, Henrik, 162
Peer Gynt, 187
Imperial College London, 68
Imperial College of Engineering, 68
Imperial Marine Insurance Company, The, 22, 31
Irish Times, The, 163

J

J. & R. Raimes & Company, 16–17
James, Henry, 72
Turn of the Screw, The, 89
Japan, 153
Jedburgh, 27, 29, 46, 51, 68
Jena (Germany), 143
Jews' Hospital and Orphan Asylum, The, 65
Johannesburg, 97
John (surname unknown), 117
John Long (publisher), 97, 100–102
John O'London's Weekly, 152
Jonathan Cape (publisher), 101, 106

Jones, Eugene Ernest, 141
Jones, Peter Andrew, 184
Jones/Joyce, Edith Marian (cousin), 21, 141
Journal of English and Germanic Philology, The, 178
Journal of Narrative Technique, The, 178
Joyce, Edward Ernest (cousin), 21, 23, 47
Joyce, Henry Edward (uncle), 19–21, 23, 26, 28, 30, 35–36, 41–42
Joyce, James
Finnegans Wake, 177
Ulysses, 124
Joyce, Margaret Annie (cousin), 21, 41
Joyce/Bellamy, Marianne (aunt), 19–21, 41, 141
Judge, Peter Leonard, 115, 154

K

Kafka, 39
Kaiser, Henry
Seance, The, 188
Kansas City Star, The, 166
Karpinska, Janina, 190
Keats, 56
Kelly, Stuart, 191
Kelso (Scotland), 51
Kenmore (Scotland), 16
Kennedy, Barbara (grandmother), 16–17
Kennedy, Gilbert (great uncle), 18
Kennedy, James John (great uncle), 17–18
Kennedy, Jane Anne (great aunt), 18
Kennedy, John (great grandfather), 16
Kennington (London), 87
Kent Championship Cup, The (chess), 45
Kent County Chess Association, The, 43–45
Kent County Cup, The (chess), 44–45
Kentish Mercury, The, 30, 43–44, 198
Kewpie Forest (musician), 188
Kipling, Rudyard, 72
Kirkton of Newdosk, 15
Kirkus Reviews, 177
Kubrick, Stanley
2001 - A Space Odyssey, 170

L

L. A. Weekly, 187
Lachman, Gary, 191
Ladywell (Lewisham), 42
Ladywell Cemetery, 39, 56, 108
Laertius, Diogenes, 38
Langland, William
Piers Plowman, 177
Lawrence, D. H., 72
Le Queux, William, 97
Leamington Spa, 19
Leathers, Marilynn, 166
Lee (Lewisham), 42
Lee, Lewisham, and Blackheath Permanent Building Society, 22
Leeds Mercury, The, 99
Leiber, Fritz, 184
Leipzig, 143
Lewis Cup, The (chess), 45
Lewis, C. S., 158–159, 162, 166, 171, 177–179, 181, 184, 192
"On Stories", 158
Out of the Silent Planet, 158
Perelandra, 158–159
Screwtape Letters, The, 159
"The Kappa Element in Fiction", 158
Lewisham, 15, 21, 41–42
Lewisham Chess Club, The, 43–45
Lewisham Cycle Club, The, 40
Leytonstone (London), 41
Liddiard, Norman George, 149
Life and Letters (periodical), 137
Lindisfarne, 27
Lindsay (later Baz), Helen (daughter), 62, 71, 97, 104, 112, 115, 118–119, 143–144, 146, 150, 152
Lindsay (later Moon), Diana (daughter), 71, 82–83, 104–105, 112, 115, 118–119, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150–152, 167, 174

marriage, 148
trip to Germany, 142–143
Lindsay & Gilmour Pharmacies, 16
Lindsay, Alexander (brother), 39
bankruptcy, 48–50, 114
birth, 21
chess, 43–44
cycling, 40
death, 55–56
education, 23–24, 33
employment, 35, 47–48
marriage, 40–41
writing, 51–54
writings
"A Scrap of Paper", 52
Alias, The, 7, 51–52, 54
Husband She Bought, The, 52, 55
Just Like Other Men, 52, 55
Kapak, 52, 54
Monsieur Carnifex, 52–53, 55
Outside the Law, 52–54
Posthumous Papers of the Pilkington Bicycle Club, The, 40
"The Experiment", 52
Lindsay, Alexander (father), 17, 21
disappearance, 29–32
work, 22
Lindsay, Alexander (grandfather), 15–16
death, 17
marriage, 16
Lindsay, Anne (aunt), 17, 27, 69
Lindsay, Charles William (uncle), 17
Lindsay, David
army service, 58–59, 62, 67–69
birth, 21
character, 8–10, 60–61, 66, 113, 115–117, 146–147
belief in the supernatural, 57
mysticism, 138
views on race, 121, 142–143
chess, 43–45, 198–199
death, 151
final illness, 150–151
funeral, 151
education, 23–26, 32–34
scholarship, 23–24, 33
employment, 35–37, 69
engagement to cousin, 46, 61
finances, 71, 107, 112, 144
friendships, 42–43, 86–88, 105, 107, 114–115, 117, 141–142, 149
gardening, 71, 117
homes
Blackheath Rise, Lewisham, 21–22, 41, 108
Greenways, Ferring, 112
Lynscott, St Columb Minor, 71, 98
Meadowbank, Ferring, 112, 141
Park Drive, Golders Green, 67–68
Pembroke Crescent, Hove, 146
Ruberslaw, Finchley Road, 68
Trevelgue House, Trevelgue, 97–98, 113
marriage, 60–62, 66–67, 69, 80, 83, 104, 117, 141, 145, 150
physical description, 58
reading, 37–39
religious background, 26–27, 29
themes
coming together of male and female, 95
dreams and visions, 9, 61, 80, 93–96, 103–104
indifference towards fate, 118–119
music, 9, 94–95, 122
writing process, 93–94, 96, 137–139, 152
Lindsay, Gilbert (uncle), 17, 31
Lindsay, Margaret (sister), 21, 26–27, 35, 41, 46, 87, 108, 115, 117, 141, 148–152, 174
Lindsay, Robert (great uncle), 16
Lindsay, Robert (uncle), 17
Lindsay, Sir Alexander, of Crawford, 15

Lindsay, William (great grandfather), 16
Lindsay/Bellamy, Bessy (Elizabeth) (mother), 18–21, 26, 30, 33, 39, 41, 46, 62, 108, 141
Lindsay/Lindsay Hilson, Mary (aunt), 17, 27, 29, 69
Lindsay/Peacock, Florence Lucy (sister-in-law), 40–41, 50, 55, 107
Lindsay/Silver, Jacqueline (wife), 60–63, 65–67, 69, 80, 112, 117, 145, 150–151, 155, 160
  addresses before & after marriage, 65, 67, 152
  at school, 65
  birth, 64
  character, 60, 66–67, 71, 117
  family background, 62–65
  life after David's death, 152
  on David's writing, 152
  trip to Madeira, 141
  trips to the US, 62, 83, 104–105, 141
Lines Review, 174
List, The (website), 192
Literary Yearbook, The, 107
Little Worthing Players, 118
Liverpool, 83
Lloyd, Edward, 35
Lloyd's List, 20, 28, 30, 35
Lloyd's of London, 22, 35–36
London, 15, 18
London Chess League, The, 43
London, Jack
  Before Adam, 164
  Star Rover, The, 164
Long Itchington (Warwickshire), 19
Longsdon, Reverend W. Hook, 25, 44
Los Angeles, 97
Los Angeles Times, 187
Love (band)
  Forever Changes, 169
Lovecraft, H. P., 61, 184
Loveland, Kenneth, 186
Luna, 171
Lyme Regis, 70
Lynd, Robert, 72–73, 76, 81
Lytton, Lord. see Bulwer-Lytton, Edward

M

MacCarthy, Desmond, 107, 122, 137
MacDonald, George, 37, 171, 177
  Lilith, 37, 125
  Phantastes, 8, 37, 177
Machen, Arthur
  "The Bowmen", 52
Machine Gun Corps, 68
Macintyre, Janet (great grandmother), 17
Mackay, Steve and the Radon Ensemble, 188
Macmillan (publisher), 164–165, 169
Madeira, 141
Magic Theatre, The, 171
Magnússon, Eiríkr, 38
Maine International Film Festival, 192
Malenky Slovos (band), 188
Manchester Guardian, The. see Guardian, The
Marquis of Lothian, The, 51
Martin, Seán, 191
  Vast Shadow House, A, 191
Masons, The, 28
Maspero, Gaston, 39
  Art in Egypt, 39
Massey, Ronald Thornhill Edmonds, 97, 110, 113, 137
Maurois, André
  Earth Dwellers, The, 164
May Laws, The, 63
McClure, J. Derrick, 177–178, 191
McNeill, Archibald, 18
Melrose, Andrew, 107
Melville, Herman
  Moby Dick, 38
Merton College (Oxford University), 158

Methuen (publisher), 71–73, 80–81, 88–89, 93, 96–97, 128
Metropolitan District Asylum For Imbeciles, 59, 66
Metz, Rafi, 190
Meyrink, Gustav, 114, 140
MI5, 106
Military Service Act, 58
Mill Lane Cemetery (Shoreham), 151
Miller, P. Schuyler, 167
Milne, A. A.
Red House Mystery, The, 81, 85
Milne, Dr Louise, 191
Milton, John, 86, 153
mindatlarge (band), 188
Miss Marshall's Riding School, 118
Modernism, 124
Moldavia, 63
Molière, 24
Mommsen, Theodor
History of Rome, 39
Montaigne, 38
Monthly Review, The, 147
Moon, Alexander Francis (grandson), 149
Moon, Andrew David (grandson), 148
Moon, Harold Gordon (son-in-law), 148–149
Moore, Alan, 189, 191–192
Moore, Phil, 186, 191, 193
Morris, William, 38, 171
Morton, Frank, 78
Moseley, Oswald, 143–144
Mozart, 94
Muggeridge, Malcolm, 122
Muller, F. Max, 38
Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, 38
Muller, O. C., 45
Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, 171
Musselburgh News, The, 132
Mussolini, 119
Myers, F. W. H., 106
Myers, L. H., 105–107, 115, 117, 122, 126, 137, 147, 149, 168
Myrtle (Manitoba), 43

N

National Library of Scotland, The, 174
NcNiele, H. C., 102
Neo (band), 188
Nesbit, E., 80
New Celtic Opera, 185
New Statesman, The, 137, 162
New Wave, The (science fiction), 181
New York, 62, 66, 83, 97
New York Times Book Review, The, 166
New York Times, The, 111, 180
Newdosk, 15
Newquay, 70
Newquay County Court, 112
Newquay Voice, The, 71
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 37, 74
Thus Spake Zarathustra, 74
Nikola, Dr, 97, 129
Nodens Books, 190
Norse Sagas, 38
Northern Fever Hospital, 50, 55
Northern Whig, The, 132
Notes & Queries, 153, 155
Novalis, 37
Nye, Robert, 164, 173, 176

O

Occult Review, The, 91
Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, 186
Ogdon, John, 186
Olympic, RMS, 83
Opera (periodical), 186
Orwell, George, 106
Osbourne, Lloyd, 38
Otago Witness, The, 98–99
Ovingdean, 150
Oxford University, 114

Oxford University Press, 96

P

Paine, Miss, 118
Palestine, 62, 64
Pan Books, 174
Paris, 97
Partridge, Frances, 106
Pauper's Press, 188
Pawling, Sydney, 96
Peake, Mervyn
  Gormenghast trilogy, 168
Pearl, 177
Penguin Books, 190
Penguin Classics, 190
Pepper, Bob, 169
Perthshire (Scotland), 16
Physick, Edward Joseph, 86
Physick, Maude, 86, 117, 149–150, 153
Pick, J. B., 152, 160–161, 173, 175, 191
  Great Shadow House, The, 161
  Strange Genius of David Lindsay, The (with Visiak and Wilson), 153, 168, 172–174, 177
Pick, Jan, 191
Pirandello, 162
Plato, 38
Plymouth, 70
Poe, Edgar Allan, 74, 164
Porth (Cornwall), 70
Porth Beach Hotel, 98
Post Office Savings Bank, The, 35
Post, J. B., 171
Power, David, 191–192
  David Lindsay's Vision, 188
  "Matterplay", 188
Powys, John Cowper, 107
Powys, Llewelyn, 107
Powys, T. F., 107
Price Forbes, 35–37, 42, 69–70
  offices, 36
Priestley, J. B., 124–125
Project Gutenberg, 165, 190
Protection of Your Home Against Air Raids, The, 147
Proust, Marcel, 162
Pullman, Philip, 192
Punch (magazine), 81, 86, 162
Putnam (publisher), 121–122, 127, 133, 136–137, 139
Pyke, Geoffrey, 106

Q

Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science, The, 132

R

Rabkin, Eric S., 178
Radcliffe, Ann, 113
Radford, Dr Andrew, 191
Radio Times, The, 153
Raff, Melvin, 177
Ragg, Thomas Murray, 121–122, 136
Raimes Clark & Co. Ltd, 16
Register, The (Adelaide), 78
Remarque, Erich Maria, 122
Rhodes, Richard, 166
Riesco, R. F. A., 37
Ritchie, Alick P. F., 83
Robert McBride (publisher), 110–111
Romaine, Suzanne, 192
Romania, 62–63
Rosh Pina (Palestine), 62, 64
Rothschild, Baron Edmond de, 64
Routledge (publisher), 122
Rover Safety Bicycle, 40
Roxburgh (Scotland), 29
Royal Academy of Arts, The, 87
Royal Arsenal, The, 87
Royal College of Music, The, 68
Royal Exchange, The, 35
Royal Geographical Society, The, 28
Royal Leamington Spa, 19
RSPCA, 113

Rushey Green (Lewisham), 42
Russia, 63

S

Saga of Grettir the Strong, The, 38
San Francisco Examiner, The, 166
Savoy Books, 189
Sayers, Dorothy L., 114
Schiller, Friedrich, 37
Schofield, Jack, 177
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 37
science fiction, 165–167, 170, 172, 181–182, 184–185
Scots Chronicle, The, 160
Scots Guards, 59
Scotsman, The, 51, 109, 130, 164, 173, 176, 179
Scott, Sir Walter, 38
Scottish Literary Journal, The, 177
Scottish Storytelling Centre, The, 191
Scriabin, Aleksandr, 189
Seaford, 148, 152
Sellin, Bernard, 178, 191
  Life & Works of David Lindsay, The, 178–179
Serling, Rod, 171
SF Commentary, 170
SF Review, 169
Shadwell (London), 62, 65
Shakespeare, William, 37
Shannon, Sheila, 155
Shead, Joy Dennington Harvey, 153
Sheffield Daily Telegraph, The, 109
Sheffield Independent, The, 98
Shelley, 56
Sherriff, R. C.
  Hopkins Manuscript, The, 164
Shiel, M. P., 114, 129
  Purple Cloud, The, 162
Shipping & Mercantile Gazette, The, 20, 28, 30, 35–36, 41
Shoreham, 151
Sidgwick & Jackson, 175
Silver, Mrs Yvonne. see Silverman/Weschler, Yetta (mother-in-law)
Silverberg, Robert
  Son of Man, 182–183
  To Live Again, 183
Silverman, Benadict (father-in-law), 63–64
Silverman, Bernard (brother-in-law), 62, 64–65
Silverman, Charles (brother-in-law), 64–66
Silverman, David Leopold (brother-in-law), 64–66
Silverman, Solomon (brother-in-law), 64–65
Silverman/Weschler, Yetta (mother-in-law), 62–66, 83, 108
Singleton, Emma, 82
Singleton, Mary Meretta, 82
"Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy", 8, 27, 38–39, 59–60, 66, 86, 142–143, 152, 174, 189
  publication, 174
Sketch, The, 126
Smith, Thorne, 110
Snow, C. P., 162
Society for Psychical Research, The, 106
Soldiers' Effects Department, 68
Sorbonne, 178
Sossi, Ron, 186
Southampton, 41, 83
Southlands Hospital (Shoreham), 151
Spectator, The, 109
Spenser, Edmund
  Faerie Queene, The, 74, 166, 177
Sphere Books, 184
Sphinx, 7, 9, 70, 87, 93–95, 100–101, 103, 118, 120, 124, 141
  characters
    Cabot, Nicholas, 70, 94, 96
    Jensen, Lore, 95–96
  publication, 97–98, 175, 190
  rejections, 96
  reviews, 98–100, 176–177

summary, 93
writing, 93
Spitalfields (London), 62
Spittal (Northumberland), 27, 32
Spottiswoode & Co., 20, 39
St Brandan's Kindergarten and Preparatory School, 112, 118
St Columb Minor (Cornwall), 70
St-George-in-the-East (London), 65
Stableford, Brian, 176, 191
Stalin, 149
Stapledon, Olaf, 73, 107, 158
Sirius, 73
Star, The (Christchurch, New Zealand), 90
Starmont Reader's Guides, 184
Steiner, Rudolf, 122
Stepney (London), 64–65
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 38
The Wrecker, 38
Stockhausen, Karlheinz, 188
Stopes, Marie, 122
Straus, Ralph, 78, 114
Strong, L. A. G., 128
Studies in Scottish Fiction, 177
Studies in Scottish Literature, 160, 177
Sturgeon, Theodore, 184
Sturgess, Philip, 176
Sulla, 142
Sun, The (Sydney), 157
Sunday Times, The (Sydney), 78
Sutcliffe, Dr Steven, 191
Sutton Coldfield, 152
Swayer, Andy, 184
Swindon, 149
Sydney Morning Herald, The, 156, 163

T

T. L. Forbes & Son, 35–36
Tartarus Press, 190
Tarwater (band), 188
Tebb, Maud Evelyn, 117
Teesdale Street School, 65
Tennyson, Alfred, 163
Theatre Genesis (New York), 171
Thicknesse-Woodington, F.
Fate the Marplot, 81
Thomas, Ron
Scenes from A Voyage to Arcturus, 188
Thornton, A. G., 83
Tieck, Ludwig, 37, 86
Times Literary Supplement, The, 74–75, 89, 98, 116, 129, 163, 172–173, 178
Times, The, 107, 163
Tinsley, Samuel, 44, 199
Tolkien, J. R. R., 159, 166, 168, 179, 181, 185, 192
"Leaves from The Notion Club Papers", 159
Lord of the Rings, The, 159, 168
Tolstoy, 38, 180
Torquay, 70
Transvestia (periodical), 192
Trelawn School, 118
Trewin, J. C., 162
Truro County Court, 112
Tunbridge Wells, 45
Turgenev, 38
Twilight Zone, The, 171

U

Union, The (club), 107
University Challenge, 192
University of Glasgow, 191

V

Vakula (musician)
Voyage to Arcturus, A (album), 188–189
Valentine, Mark, 45
Vector, 176
Vega, Lope de, 162
Venture, 170
Verne, Jules, 38, 74, 77, 80
Victoria, Queen, 19, 42

Violet Apple, The, 61, 66, 95, 103–104, 160, 168
characters
Croyland, Haidee, 68, 95
Kerr, Anthony, 66, 95
publication, 174–175
rejections, 102
reviews, 175–176
summary, 103
typescript, 174
writing, 102
Visiak, E. H., 39, 57, 85, 87, 113, 115, 117, 121, 141–142, 149–150, 155, 188
Battle Fiends, The, 86
Buccaneer Ballads, 85
correspondence with Lindsay, 86–87, 114–115, 119, 174
early life & career, 85–86
Flints and Flashes, 85
later life, 153, 168, 172–173
Life's Morning Hour, 153
Medusa, 114, 155, 162
Milton Agonistes, 153
Mirror of Conrad, The, 153
on Lindsay, 9–10, 116, 173
Phantom Ship and Other Poems, The, 85
Portent of Milton, 153
Strange Genius of David Lindsay, The. see Pick, J. B, Strange Genius of David Lindsay, The
"The Arcturan Shadow", 153
War of the Schools, The, 85
Vityk, Mikhaylo. see Vakula
Voyage to Arcturus, A, 7, 11, 27, 31, 37, 54, 61, 81, 88, 94, 107, 114–116, 121, 124, 133, 143, 152–153, 158, 160, 167, 171–173, 179, 181, 183–185, 192–193
adaptations
album by Henry Kaiser, 188
album by Ron Thomas, 188
album by Vakula, 188–189
film by William Holloway, 171–172
instrumentals (various), 188
musical by Phil Moore, 186, 191, 193
opera by Paul Corfield Godfrey, 185–186
oratorio by John Ogdon, 186
performance by Magic Theatre, 171
radio dramatisation on BBC Third Programme, 161–162
stage adaptation by Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, 186–187
characters
Backhouse, 9, 94
Corpang, 138
Crystalman, 61, 115, 183, 191
Digrung, 162
Faull, Montague, 9, 68
Gleameil, 32, 61
Haunte, 61
Jameson, Mrs, 9, 95
Joiwind, 61, 94, 171, 186, 188
Kent-Smith, 94
Krag, 10, 94
Lang, 97
Leehallfae, 162, 192
Maskull, 8, 10, 61, 186
Nightspore, 8–10, 162, 186
Oceaxe, 61, 183, 186
Panawe, 94, 192
Polecrab, 32
comments on
Bloom, Harold, 180
Gollancz, Victor, 113, 155
Lewis, C. S., 158–159
Lindsay, David, 85, 114, 122, 137
MacCarthy, Desmond, 137
Myers, L. H., 105
Priestley, J. B., 125
Silverberg, Robert, 182
Tolkien, J. R. R., 159
Visiak, E. H., 86, 117
West, Rebecca, 126

Wilson, Colin, 168
efforts to get reissued, 114, 136
illustrations, 88, 115
publication, 71–73, 79, 155, 161, 164, 169, 174, 189–190
audiobooks, 190
edits to US edition, 165
reviews, 73–79, 90, 100, 131, 155–157, 162–164, 166–167, 169–171, 182
settings
Ifdawn Marest, 184
Lichstorm, 162
Muspel, 61, 94, 159, 181, 186
Sinking Sea, The, 32, 34
Starkness, 181
Swaylone's Island, 32, 61, 188
Threal, 8, 138
translations, 175, 190
writing, 71

W

W. E. Keville & Co., 35
Wairarapa Daily Times, The, 77
Wallace, Edgar, 97
Wallace, Rod, 188
Warner, Paul, 188
Warwick, 19
Warwickshire, 19
Watson (Walsall) Ltd, 48
Watson, Ian, 161, 183
Death Hunter, 183–184
Watson, Roderick, 174
Watts and Co.. see A. P. Watt
Webster, Anne (great grandmother), 16
Weekend Review, The, 126
Weimar, 143
Wellington (New Zealand), 97
Wells, H. G., 38, 72, 74, 77, 158, 178
Werner Laurie (publisher), 101
West Australian, The, 132, 137
West, D., 176
West, Rebecca, 124–125
Westbury, Marjorie, 162
Western Morning News, The, 41, 82, 131
Wilde, Oscar, 72, 113
Williams, Charles, 114
Place of the Lion, The, 155
Williamson, Henry, 24, 122, 168
Wilson, Colin, 102, 153, 161, 167–168, 172, 175, 179, 189, 192
Eagle and Earwig, 168
Outsider, The, 167
Ritual in the Dark, 167
Strange Genius of David Lindsay, The. see Pick, J. B., The Strange Genius of David Lindsay
Windmill Theatre, 115
Witch, The, 9, 37, 94–95, 138, 140, 144, 151, 160
publication, 174
rejections, 139, 141
summary, 139–140
typescript, 174
writing, 137–139, 141
Wodehouse, P. G., 102
Wolfe, Gary K., 7–8, 38, 165, 168, 177–179, 182, 184, 191
Known and the Unknown, 184
Starmont Reader's Guide 9 - David Lindsay, 184
Wolfe, Gene, 182
Wolpe, David, 186
Women's Auxiliary Air Force, 150
Woodring, Jim, 190
Woolf, Virginia
Mrs Dalloway, 124
Woolsorter's disease, 151
Woolwich Gazette, The, 30
World War, First, 58, 63, 65, 68, 86–87
conscription & enlistment, 58–59
soldiers' basic training, 59
World War, Second, 57
preparations, 144, 147

Worlds Classics, 96
Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, The, 23–24
Worthing, 70, 112–113
Worthing Herald, The, 133
Worthing High School for Girls, 112, 142–144
Worthington, Samuel, 112
Wraith, Gavin, 191
Wright, Sidney Fowler, 49–50, 53, 114
Amphibians, The, 49

X

Xanadu Books, 175

Y

Year in the Country, A
From The Furthest Signals (album), 188
York House (school), 85, 115
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, The, 76, 129

Z

Zelazny, Roger, 184
Zippel, Chris, 188